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Reminiscences of Pioneer Life

BY
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By Robert B. [illegible]

FRECK'S PREFACE.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

This is not much of a book. But I want you to buy this book, and read it.

It is a simple story, told in a simple way, of the simple pioneer life as it was lived in the log-cabin homes, on the western frontier, in the long, long ago. And it is every whit true.

Freck, the writer, is an old pioneer, one of the common people; and the story is written about the common people, and it is written for the common people.

And you remember that Abraham Lincoln said, "God loves the common people; this is why He made so many of them."

Now, be good to yourself, and buy and read this book. This is all I have to say. Good-bye.

FRECK.

REMINISCENCES OF PIONEER LIFE

CHAPTER I.

On the fifteenth day of June, 1848, a slow-going sternwheel steamboat, the *Red Wing*, with much puffing of steam and groaning of her ponderous engines, was pushing her way up against the current of the upper Mississippi River. Dense forests lined the banks and stretched away beyond the summit of the river bluffs. Not a sign to indicate that man had ever penetrated the somber shade.

When the *Red Wing*, a week before, steamed away from the wharf at Saint Louis, she was loaded with boxes, bales, barrels, and bundles, cows, oxen, horses, and sheep; and on her hurricane deck were wagons, plows, and carts, crates of pigs and coops of chickens. Like Noah's Ark, two and two of every kind. And the deck was crowded with men, women, and children—and the faithful old dog; a crowd of immigrants, going forth to seek out and build for themselves homes on the western frontier.

On arriving at Keokuk, a large number went ashore. From this point they will go out along diverging ways, like spokes from a half-hub, and be scattered among the hills and the valleys, the forests and the prairies of the western borderland. After leaving Keokuk, stops were made at many points and others were set ashore. And on this morning but one family remained on board. This family consisted of husband and wife and their seven children. The eldest, Jim, was a lad of fourteen years; the youngest, a wee curly-headed baby girl in the Mother's arms. The second round (from the top) in the family ladder was a small, sturdy, freckle-faced boy (called "Freck" for short) of twelve years. And this same Freck has now entered upon the task of entertaining the reader.

For three weeks this family had been traveling by steamboat, having changed boats four times. Usually the blare of the whistle and the clang of the bell disturbed not their repose; but now, however, when the whistle sent out the three long-drawn-out "Whoo! whoo! whoo!" which went echoing far out into the dark, gloomy woods and died away in a moan, and the great bell on the hurricane deck pealed out "Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!" the signal for landing, a tremor took hold of them; for the mate shouted, "Port Huron! Get ready to go ashore." Port Huron was the end of the long journey by steamboat.

The little bells hanging over the engines said to the engineers, "Slow up!" And the engineers whirled the throttles, and the pilot whirled the wheel, and the *Red Wing* pointed her prow toward the western shore and crept up and poked her nose against the soft bank; and the line was made fast around a tree, and the gangplank run out; and the little group was quickly pushed ashore and their stuff piled on the ground.

Again the great bell tolled off, "Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!" which said, "Let go the line! Let go the line! Let go the line!" And the little engine bells said, "Back her off!" And the long walking-beams, reaching away back and grasping the cranks on the wheel-shaft, began to move, and the *Red Wing* backed away from the shore. And the little bells called, "Go ahead!" And the engineers adjusted the cams, and the engines reversed their motion, and the *Red Wing* began to move slowly up the river.

And the little group, with the mile-wide river on the one side and the untrodden forest on the other side, and some cord-wood on the bank, and a cabin back in the woods, but not a living thing in sight, stood on the western shore of the Mississippi River and watched their home pass around a bend out of sight.

And the mental picture which they had painted on the canvas of the brain (of a home in the romantic wildwood on the western frontier, which had cheered them on the way and which they were so eager to reach) gave place to a feeling of lonely depression; for the picturesque fanciful wildwood and the real wildwood were quite different.

Hearing footfalls, they looked around, and saw a tall, bony man, a true type of the frontiersman, clad in homespun, with his sleeves rolled to the armpits and his shirt open at the throat, and with a hearty "How-dy, stranger?" he seated himself on a box and began to ask the usual questions. This man was the woodyard-keeper. For in those days men would go into the woods and chop cord-wood in the winter, to be sold to the steamboats, and one of them would look after the sales. The land was all "Congress land," now called "Government land."

The Father had a brother living in the region of Port Huron. This was why he landed here. "Yes, I know your brother," said Mr. W——; "we all call him 'Uncle Jimmy.' He lives on Indian Creek, fifteen miles out. He was one of the first settlers in this country—came in before the Indians were moved; and he has done much to subdue the wilderness, by opening new farms and building mills. And he has the same number of sons and daughters that old Jacob had."

It was decided that Jim and Freck should go in search of Uncle Jimmy and a team. And Mr. W—— remarked: "Boys, it is only fifteen miles, and you will find a trail leading from the wood-ricks to the top of the bluffs; there take the left-hand road, and you will soon come out onto the prairie." But the boys knew not the meaning of "prairie," for they were raised in the big woods.

Having heard wild stories of bears and wolves and panthers roaming the woods in the West, the boys considered it wise to take a gun along. And the old smooth-bore was carefully loaded by the Father. And the boys crossed the river bottom and were going up the hill, when they wheeled around and started down the hill as fast as their feet could carry them. The panic subsiding, they retraced their steps. "Will it still be there? Yes; there it is." A monster snake, stretching clear across the road, his head resting on the little bank and his dark and yellow spots glistening in the sun. Jim crept up behind a big stump and, placing the gun thereon, took deliberate aim and fired, blowing the top of the snake's head off.

Because of the excitement in landing, the boys had eaten no breakfast, and in the afternoon the hand of hunger began to pinch them and the old smooth-bore increased in heaviness with each mile; the boys carrying it time about, or each grasping an end. And just as the sun was shutting his door we came to Uncle Jimmy's cabin in Indian Creek Grove, and we made ourselves and our errand known, and were given a friendly greeting. And just as the sun was showing his bright face above the eastern hills we were merrily trotting along the road to Port Huron. And in the evening we stopped before the gate at Uncle Jimmy's cabin, but Uncle Jimmy was at the Yellow Spring Mills, in Des Moines County.

And the next morning the Father started on foot to see his brother, whom he had not seen for thirty years, and to arrange for work; for his money was nearly all gone, and he would not eat the bread of idleness. And the Father returned, and we were to go to the Yellow Spring Mills. Frank could not spare a span of horses, and a couple of yoke of young oxen were yoked to the wagon, and Frank took up the whip, saying, "I will drive out through the woods and see that the steers go off all right." But they had not gone far until they crowded Frank out of the road and bounded into a gallop and went thundering down the road; and the wheels striking the stumps, the wagon went spinning along on two wheels, first on one side and then on the other side. And the Mother and the children, like balls, were tossed from side to side; the Mother holding the wee curly-headed baby girl close to her breast. At the point where the road came out onto the prairie there was a cabin, and the people, hearing the rattle, ran out and stopped the frantic beasts, where they stood with beating sides and wild-rolling eyes. The Mother sprang out and snatched her children out, and being wholly overcome, she sank to the ground and burst into hysterical crying, still holding the wee curly-headed baby girl close to her bosom. The young steers were unhitched and a yoke of steady going oxen was borrowed from Sam, the Father took up the whip, and we started off to the southward.

That night was the beginning of our camping-out. Soon the camp-fire was blazing, and the perfume of frying bacon and boiling coffee floated away on the evening air, and the boys were chuck-full of the gladness of the new life. Blankets were spread on the grass, and soon the voices all were hushed and we were sleeping, for the first time, beneath the stars of heaven, on the western frontier.

The next day we crossed the Iowa River on a rope ferry. Old-timers need no explanation of a rope ferry, but to those who have not known nor will ever know a western frontier and the rude and primitive ways I will say that a rope ferry was a simple affair. A strong rope was made fast around a tree near the bank, and the othe end was carried across the river and tied to a tree; two short ropes, with grooved pulleys to follow along the big rope, were made fast to the flatboat near each end, and, by a device for the purpose, the bow rope was shortened, placing the boat diagonally across the current, and the water would drive it across.

The city of Wapello, the county seat of Louisa County, a city of five or six cabins, stood on the bank of the river.

In due time we arrived at the Yellow Spring Mills, and in a few hours housekeeping was begun, in a one-room cabin, without window or floor; the cooking was done at the fireplace, and the washing down at the branch.

After allowing the oxen a day to rest, Jim and Freck were started off to return the oxen. In the afternoon of the first day one of the bow-keys broke, and the bow fell from the yoke, and the off ox walked out of the road; and when we attempted to bring him under the yoke, he kept on feeding and getting farther and farther away. Men working in a near-by field came to our assistance and a new key was fitted, and, thanking our friends, we went on our way.

On our homeward journey the ferryman set us over the river in his canoe, a big log scooped out and pointed off a little at the ends; it rolled and pitched at each stroke of the oars, and threatened to turn bottom side up—but it didn't.

Jim was put to work helping the Father haul wood to the mill with a yoke of black oxen. Freck was given a position in the carding-mill. His duty was to spread the wool evenly on a table over which an endless apron revolved, and sprinkle it with melted grease; the moving apron carried the wool within the reach of the teeth on the revolving cards, and it came out on the other side of the machine in rolls, ready for the spinning-wheel.

Settlers would come for fifty miles, bringing their own and their neighbors' wool, pinned with thorns in old sheets and blankets, and fetching along the required amount of grease in old crocks and coffee-pots. A record was kept of each bundle, and a time set to return for the rolls.

The return home with the rolls was the beginning of a season of activity in the cabins. The spinning-wheels were gotten out and put in order. There were two kinds of spinning-wheels used, the big wheel and the little wheel. The little wheel was the more common. The spinner sat on a stool and turned the wheel with her foot and manipulated the roll with her hands. And the boy who sat night after night and dozed by the smoldering fire, and listened to the "Whirr, whirr, whirr," and the "Buzz, buzz, buzz," will hear the song of his Mother's spinning-wheel while he lives.

Because of its greater capacity, the big wheel was preferred where there were big girls. The spinner walked backward and forward, turning the wheel with a wheel-hook, and drawing out the roll to great length. And backward and forward she tramped, until the puncheons were worn smooth by her bare feet and the great bundles of rolls were converted into thread.

Next came the dyeing, then the weaving, then the making of the garments. Even the thread was manufactured in the cabin home. The thread, and the fine linen, and the tow cloth for hunting-shirts and grain bags came up step by step from the flax-patch, which was planted and pulled, scutched and hackled and spun by the mothers and daughters.

The sewing-machine and the washing-machine were unknown. The washing was done down at the branch, by dipping soft soap with the hand from a gourd hanging on a limb and smearing it on the garments, and rubbing them between the knuckles; while the baby kicked and cooed in a sugar-trough in the shade.

And the everlasting knitting! On looking back, it seems that girls were never too little to knit. And women going visiting, riding or walking, plied their knitting-needles on the way.

CHAPTER II.

The days at Yellow Spring Mills glided away, with nothing to disturb the even tenor of our lives. The hum of the spindles and the measured strokes of the engine were heard five days in the week. But on Saturday the low rumbling of the burrs was heard.

On Saturday the settlers had a kind of picnic, coming to the mill and to the post-office; for Uncle Jimmy kept the Hawkeye post-office. There was a weekly horseback mail. They came in wagons, with horses and with oxen, and on horseback, some toting bags of corn on their backs, some bringing their families, and having dinner in the shade down by the spring. This was "Central." The news and gossip from the different settlements was exchanged and talked over; and while waiting for their grist they would gather into groups and discuss "Free Will," "Predestination," "Infant Baptism," "Sprinkling and Immersion," and go home at peace with themselves and all the world.

The last days of August had come, and the heat in this little valley, shut in by forest-clad hills, was oppressive. Up to this time we had all enjoyed good health, but one evening the Mother was taken with a severe chill, followed by a raging fever. Early in the morning the Father started afoot for Bear Grove (it was twelve miles to Bear Grove) to fetch old Doctor Fullenwider. Doctor Fullenwider and his black horse were daily callers at that cabin home for six weeks; for one by one the children came down, until every member except the Father and little Will, an eight-year-old boy, were laid on pallets in that one-room cabin; and little Will spent his days on the path to the spring, twenty rods away, fetching water to quench the fever thirst of the sick.

In a couple of weeks the doctor had the children on their feet again, but the Mother grew weaker day by day. The doctor said, "Mr. L——, your wife cannot live longer than midnight; however, I shall return in the morning." And there was a silence; then in a whisper the Mother said, "Call the children." Taking our hands, she bade each farewell, calling us by name; and with a mother's dying love she said, "Children, remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, and at all times remember that Thou, God, seest me." For a few moments the wee curly-headed baby girl lay on the Mother's breast and patted her cheek with her baby hand. Noiselessly and tearfully we moved about, for we had not thought that our Mother might die. And when the shades of night began to gather around our cabin home, we crept into nooks and corners to watch for the midnight hour; but, like the disciples in the Garden, we went to sleep. But not so the Father; silently he kept watch. The Mother fell into sleep, and it seemed the sleep of death; but the midnight hour passed, the Mother awoke, and the crisis was passed. The doctor was much affected, and the tears dripped down over his long gray beard; for he was a conscientious doctor and a good old man. But how could he be otherwise, and be an old-time Methodist?

The Father and the Mother were worthy members of the Seceder Church. Did you say that you never heard of the Seceder Church? Well, it was not a strong church, and it was a very exclusive church. It was a breach of discipline to attend the services of any other denomination. But as a God-fearing and a God-honoring people, they stood on the very apex. The Seceder Church was born in Scotland, and if you require a higher endorsement, you will have to go to the skies for it. About the year 1730, the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine and a few followers seceded from the Church of Scotland; hence the name.

Inasmuch as God in His kind providence had restored each and every member of the family to health, the Father and the Mother felt it a duty to seek a home among a people of like faith. And this was a characteristic of the early settlers on the western frontier. They would not willingly cut themselves off from church privileges, and in choosing a home this end was kept in view. Uncle Jimmy was called into the council. Now Uncle Jimmy had been out of touch with the Seceders so long that he could affiliate to some extent with the Methodists; and Uncle Jimmy said: "John, I have found that there are good people among the Methodists; now, John, stay with me, and I will give you a forty-acre farm." But John hadn't been out of touch with the Seceders long enough, and John wouldn't stay. So a yoke of oxen was borrowed from Uncle Jimmy, and John pulled out for Washington, where there was a congregation of Seceders.

They followed out on the old trail to Wapello, and the first night they camped in a grove where a settler was building a house; his wife was keeping house by the side of a log, and their bed-room was the covered wagon-box. All day long we followed the dim trail across the prairie, and not a house on the way; for there were settlers only in and along the edge of the timber. The houses were all built of round logs with the bark on, and roofed with clapboards; the floors were of puncheons (split logs).

This winter was spent in the timber, making rails for Nate Harris. The price was three bits a hundred. Money in those days was counted by picayunes and bits. A picayune was six and a fourth cents; a bit, twelve and a half cents; four bits, half a dollar; and six bits, seventy-five cents. The Father cut down the trees and split the rails, while Jim and Freck sawed off the rail cuts; and some days the three would earn a dollar.

In the spring of 1849 a farm was rented, and a yoke of oxen (old Jack and Jerry) was bought of Josiah Dawson for thirty-eight dollars, with a log-chain thrown into the bargain.

This was the Father's first attempt at farming (having worked at his trade heretofore), and the tools used on the western frontier sixty years ago would to-day cause nervous prostration. Some plows were of cast iron, and others were wooden with iron points; brush was dragged across the field to smooth the ground; to cultivate the corn, half-yokes were made, and old Jack drew one plow and old Jerry another. But, notwithstanding the primitive mode of culture, the virgin soil yielded bountiful crops, both of weeds and grain.

This summer and the next Jim and Freck and Margaret attended the Old School Presbyterian Sabbath-school. The Seceders had no Sabbath-school—they didn't think it was right to have school on the Sabbath; but, in order to hold their young people at home, they fell into line a few years later. The Presbyterians had a little white meeting-house (in those days we had *meeting-houses* and went to *meeting;* now we have *churches* and go to *church*) in the northeast part of town, and a bell—the only church-bell in town. And when this bell, every Sabbath morning, would ring out, "Come up to the house of the Lord!" the people would be seen coming along the roads and the by-paths and turning their steps toward the different places of worship; for the Seceders and the Methodists also had meeting-houses. Mr. Lynn and his charming wife conducted the Sabbath-school. The Seceders and the Presbyterians always said "the Sabbath"; only the Methodists and the wicked said "Sunday." Mr. and Mrs. Lynn were pleasant and lovely singers, and made us feel that it was good for us to be there. A small gilt-edged Bible was offered as a reward for committing to memory the Shorter Catechism. Jim, Freck, and Margaret each received a Bible; but, on looking back, I don't think that Freck deserved it. I remember that it took a deal of prompting to pull him over the home-stretch. But Mr. Lynn's heart was in the right place, and he would not dishearten the boy. Mrs. Lynn had two brothers; they were deaf-mutes, and attended Sabbath-school, but took no part. Mr. Henderson, their father, ran a blacksmith-shop, and the largest one worked at the forge.

Twice a year the Seceders had "Examination Day." They met at the meeting-house; the minister examined the members from the Confession of Faith, and an elder asked the children questions from the Shorter Catechism. Mr. Orr was an elder, and also a Scotchman; he had white bushy hair, and was a large man, with stooped shoulders and a deep, solemn voice; he lived down by the graveyard, and ran a turning-lathe, turning it with his foot. He made big spinning-wheels and little spinning-wheels, and also cradles to rock the babies in; little red boxes these were, shaped like little coffins without a lid, and set on rockers. When Elder Orr, in his solemn and austere manner, examined us, we were afraid of him and couldn't think of the answers; and we received a severe reprimand, that made us feel like criminals. But Elder Anderson: everybody, even the minister, called him "Uncle Davy." Uncle Davy was tall and slim, and came from Indiana; he had iron gray hair, and a low, soft voice, and he spoke in a half whisper. and he had a smile stowed away in the back of his head, that was all the time trying to jump out at the windows. We got on pretty well with Uncle Davy, and received a little story with a moral, and a little bit of fun to help us remember the moral.

Mr. Andrews was the Seceder minister. He lived on a farm near the Father's, and Freck was sent over quite often to hoe in the minister's garden and do chores. For some reason the minister took an interest in Freck and made advances toward friendly conversation, but Freck was afraid of the minister and could do nothing but dig his toes into the ground and say "Yes, sir," or "No, sir." But he did the work assigned him. Mrs. Andrews was tall and stately, as becometh a minister's wife, and when Mrs. Andrews, in her queenly and willowy way, came out where Freck was working, he would want to throw down his hoe and gallop off home to Mother—but he didn't dare to do it. Mr. Andrews attended Synod at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and he took Freck along as far as Crawfordsville (ten miles) to fetch back Major, the black horse. Freck did enjoy the ride home across the prairie, astride a man's new saddle.

This summer Mr. Andrews made the Father a proposition that filled Freck with consternation. This was the proposition: "Turn Freck over to me [of course the minister did not say "Freck," nor did he use these words], and I will give him an education, and when he reaches manhood, should he not care to enter the ministry, he shall be free to choose his calling." After due consideration, the Father reached the conclusion that Freck was quite a help, and as the years passed along they would slyly slip Freck a portion that would add to his usefulness. And the Mother? Well, the Mother wanted the places at the table all filled. So Freck remained beneath the boughs of the old family tree.

The old-time Seceder and Presbyterian ministers did not give the trumpet an uncertain sound; they told their people what they should do and what they should not do; that was what they were there for. And with great earnestness they would insist: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." "He that spareth the rod hateth his son." And these old-time fathers never shirked a duty. The boys were strictly trained and severely flogged. Boys were punished for neglect of duty, for saying bad words, and for making an unnecessary tumult while doing the chores on Sabbath evening; but the severest punishment was for telling a lie and for swearing. There was a difference between saying bad words and swearing; bad words were those words that lie along the border line, which of themselves are harmless, but are stepping-stones to others which are decidedly sinful. I will relate one incident to show the care with which boys were trained. The milking-pen was entered through a gate in the garden fence. One evening old Bossy was quietly harvesting the garden truck; the Father drove her out and quietly investigated, and beyond a reasonable doubt Freck was the last one to pass through the gate. Now, when the Father held court, the accused was not granted the privilege that King Agrippa granted Paul (Acts xxvi. 1). But Freck impulsively and unwisely affirmed that he had shut and latched the gate.

The judge said (for there were no jury trials in the Father's court): "Freck, I will give you a double portion —one for talking back."

The next evening at supper the Father was fidgety; finally he said: "Freck, I guess you were right in saying you had shut the gate [Freck recalled the double portion and he didn't say, 'I told you so'], for this evening I saw Bossy raise the latch with her horn and walk through. Freck, I'm sorry I punished you wrongfully, but I'm almost persuaded that Deacon Brown is right."

"How is that?" inquired the Mother.

"Well, the Deacon holds that it is better to punish a dozen innocent boys than to let one guilty one escape."

"I notice the Deacon's opinions have weight with you. Why not follow where he leads?"

"Kindly explain," remarked the Father.

"Well, the Deacon, as is his custom, flogged Johnny very severly, and learning that Johnny, for a wonder, was not guilty of the charge, said, 'Johnny, next time you shall go free.' That evening, while building fence, Johnny in swinging a rail struck his father in the face, and of course the Deacon snatched a rod and started for Johnny; but Johnny cried, 'Hold on, father; hold on! you said next time was free.' 'Sure, Johnny; sure. In my haste I had forgotten. But, Johnny, there will be another time.'"

"I take it that you wish me to give Freck a chance to butt me in the face with a rail." And he smiled the smile of the man who thinks that he has had the last word with his wife.

But the Mother nodded her head and said: "That boy is not Johnny Brown."

If the Mother's hand ever fell in punishment on Freck, it was before he can remember it.

In the summer of 1851 the Seceders built a new and larger meeting-house, and worshiped in the court-house while building.

The town was built up against the timber; and on the prairie side "Congress land" joined up against the town and extended twenty miles without a house. No one in those days thought that these broad prairies would ever be settled. At this time there was not a house on the east side of the court-house square, and but two on the west side, and not a street in the town. This was Washington, Iowa, as I knew it, from 1848 to 1854.

The settlement extended along the crooked creek timber for three miles to the northwest of town. There were eighteen cabins, and I can see each cabin and name each settler. Twelve were Seceders. On the opposite side there was but one settler.

Clemons Branch headed away out on Dutch Creek Prairie. There were groves of timber along the branch, in the bends, and it was a great deer-range; also there were mink and beaver and muskrat along the branch. The beaver would gnaw down trees a foot across, and float them down stream and build dams, covering many acres of land. The muskrats would gnaw off the big rushes and begin at the bottom and build their little hay-shock houses in the beaver dams, leaving a hole at the side at the bottom and up through the center, and above the water they would have a nice dry bed-room; when alarmed, they would slide down cellar and out the open door and swim away out into the lake.

Mike Dugan was a hunter, a trapper, and an Irishman. There were a good many "Mikes" along the border in the early days, but not all Irishmen. Mike Dugan was better off than the most of them; for Mike had a yoke of oxen, a cow, a pig, his gun and traps, several little "Mikes" and "Noras," and a wife. Mike "squatted" on "Congress land," away up on Clemons Branch; he built a pen of logs and called it a house, and fenced a little field with logs and poles, and while Mike carried his gun and watched his traps, the "old woman" (as Mike called her) worried the face of the little field until it yielded some potatoes and stuff. For five years the little field and the branch were the boundary of the world to the "old woman" and the little "Mikes" and "Noras," and then the "old woman" died. Mike buried her, without a coffin, away up on Clemons Branch. And the wives of these early days, like Mike Dugan's, became silent, morose, and without hope; and the children were half naked, half wild, and half starved.

Ike was a good-natured, long-legged fellow, and he got married. It does seem as though almost anybody can get married. Ike did love to tote a gun and follow a deer-track. Ike (I knew Ike mighty well) built a sorry cabin in a dark hollow, and borrowed a yoke of oxen and moved in. Then there fell a good tracking snow, and Ike struck out with his gun. It was three miles to the settlement, the snow was a foot deep, and Mrs. Ike didn't know the way out. Two days passed down the dark hollow, and the nights tagged along after the days, and still Ike did not return. Mrs. Ike carried bark into the cabin and baked bread and boiled venison; for, although Mrs. Ike had lived two years in the dark hollow, she was a woman still. She placed the swaddling-clothes under her pillow, and when Ike returned home, he found a little boy four days old. But when the springtime found its way into the dark hollow, Mrs. Ike found her way out and to her father's house, and never again did she return to the dark hollow nor to Ike. The last I knew of Ike, he was in a mining-camp in the Rocky Mountains, and he was wearing a tall hat and sporting a cane; for Ike had the position of floor-manager in a dance-hall. (These are no idle tales, drawn from the imagination.)

In those days the cabins were much alike: built of round logs and roofed with clapboards, with weight-poles to hold the clapboards in place; not a nail used in the building. The windows were holes in the walls, and the floors were of puncheons. The fireplace took up most of one end, and the crane, with links and hooks to hang the kettles on, was built into the fireplace. Bread was baked in a cast-iron oven with long feet and a lid with a rim; live coals were piled under and over and around the oven, and a loaf would come out moist and sweet. It was manna, compared with the shop-bread of to-day. One end of the porch belonged to the men; and on pins were hung the gears, the seed corn tied by the shuck, the hoes, the rakes, the grain cradles and the scythes, and many other things. On the other end was the water-bench, with a gourd hanging on its pin above the bucket; and there were the tubs, and the big brass kettle in which was made the wild plum and pumpkin butter; also bundles of thrums, and sheaves of catnip, boneset, and pennyroyal, for medical purposes, and tansy, mint, and wintergreen, for the spring bitters.

And the ash-hopper! No home was complete without an ash-hopper, which was a section of a hollow tree. In this the winter ashes were stored, and at soap-making time water was poured over the ashes and the resulting lye carried from the lye-trough to the big soap-kettle hanging on a pole between two logs, and a slow fire kept burning for several days. A child stood guard with a gourd of cold lye, to see that the soap did not boil over; and the child would be delighted when the mother would say: "That will do. Now you can run away and play."

Mike Hay was the richest man in the settlement; he had a big farm and a long family ladder—all girls but long slim Stew and little Mike in the cradle. Mike sent Stew along with Rob Don and two others to catch buffalo calves. They drove up north near Ft. Des Moines (now the capital of the State), across the trackless prairie, with oxen; taking along some cows to nurse the buffalo calves, also horses to run down the calves. They got back home with eight; many died on the way. The buffalo did not take kindly to domestic life; they all died before three years, and there was no increase. Rob Don undertook to break his two to the yoke, but in their wild way they ran against the corner of the barn and killed themselves. The Father bought a big yoke of oxen (Duke and Dime) from Mike, and paid for them in breaking prairie.

The storekeepers had their goods hauled from the Mississippi River, where they were unloaded from steamboats into warehouses built on stilts in the edge of the river. In the fall and winter the Father "teamed" from the river away back into the interior a hundred and fifty miles; he took Freck along for a helper, and always camped out. On one of these trips to Burlington the Father was taken sick, and Freck had to drive and care for the two yoke of oxen, build the camp-fires, fry the bacon, boil the coffee, bake the flapjacks, and wind his oxen in among the many teams waiting to be first at the door of the warehouse. No small task for a fourteen-year-old boy. But boys on the frontier soon learned to be self-reliant.

In those early days there were no music-books in the churches. The psalm was "lined out," two lines at a time. Two young men ("clerks") sat in front of the pulpit, and the minister would stand and raise his hand, the congregation would rise to their feet, and the minister would read:

"That man hath perfect blessedness
Who walketh not astray,"

and the "clerks" would raise the tune; when these two lines were sung, one of the "clerks" would read:

"In council of ungodly men,
Nor stands in sinners' way,"

and the whole congregation would join in the singing. Even the children were taught to join in singing the psalm. There were no organs, no horns, nor fiddles; no little man slashing the air with his little wooden sword, showing off his trained choir to a mute congregation; but the meeting-house trembled with the volume of song as the good old Psalms of David were sung to the good old tunes of "Ortonville," "Mear," and others.

CHAPTER III.

In those days a barrel of whiskey was a part of the storekeeper's stock, and a tin cup stood on the head of the barrel. And the taverns, (now called "hotels") had a "bar-room." Notwithstanding this free-to-all condition, there was not a hundredeth part of the drunkenness and crime of to-day. In five years there was not a drunken brawl on the streets of Washington. And a policeman was unknown, even in name.

Down in Big Bend lived old man Ruff and his sons and his sons-in-law. They were from Kentucky, and a mighty clever people, who kept several race-horses and liked Kentucky fun. The old man (a strapping big old Kentuckian, with a bald head) had turned the leadership over to big John, and John wanted to make good. There had never been a show in town, and when the tavern barn was plastered with show-bills, everybody that could read stopped and read, and the others looked at the pictures. We lived in the last house on the Iowa City road, and Iowa City was the State capital. The show was to come across the twenty-mile prairie (without a house), and we children were lined up on the fence, watching. Early in the morning (for they drove all night) a shout went up, "Here they come!" And sure enough, they were pulling over the Lone Tree Lake Divide, away out at the head of Long Creek. What a sight! Great chariots, drawn by four bespangled horses; huge wild beasts, sprawling in their cages, enjoying the cool morning air; monster elephants, flapping their big ears; and the little spotted Shetland ponies! Freck cried, "Oh! I wish I had one of those to drive up the oxen in the morning, instead of getting wet with the dew to the armpits." For the first time Freck felt that he was being cheated out of a part of the good things of this life that were coming to him, and he pouted and scolded his oxen all the day, and he resolved to have a spotted Shetland pony or he would run away. But the show passed on, and Freck drove up the oxen in the same old way.

On show day morning the Big Benders came galloping into town, Big John and his young Kentucky wife, as tall as he, at the head of the column. In true Kentucky style, they circled around the court-house square, and then gracefully curved around to the tavern and dismounted, and the horses were taken to the barn. They all went into the tent and took seats together, and things went smoothly until John jumped over the rope to show the clown how to handle a whip. But John was hustled back and made to sit down real hard. "I 'll see you fellers after the show," said John. "All right; and ye needn't git out nary sarch-warrant to find us, neither," grinned the clown. After the show the Big Benders took their women-folks over to the tavern; then they repaired to the barn, and were telling each other (and they didn't talk in whispers) what they would do to "them show fellers." There was a whistle, and "them show fellers," armed with tent-pins, tumbled over the fence all around; but the Big Benders didn't have tent-pins. They led John's horse and his tall young wife's horse home, and she stayed at the tavern and nursed John until he was able to be taken home; and she was proud of John, because John had made good.

CHAPTER IV.

The spring of 1851 has rolled around. Three years have sunk to the bottom of the Sea of the Past since we walked from the deck of the *Red Wing* onto the wild western bank of the Mississippi River. The passing years have been filled with toil and privation and hardships, mingled with simple pleasure and enjoyment, in our cabin home on the western frontier. This spring the great rush to the California "gold-diggings" continued. Long trains of covered wagons, drawn by five and six yoke of oxen, were daily passing; penciled on the covers were many inscriptions and mottoes and the name of the place from which they came. These men and boys (for a vast number were only striplings) who rushed off to the California "diggings" in forty-nine and the early fifties afterwards became known as "Forty-niners." How many of these "Forty-niners" are living to-day to tell the story? In 1890 the Association of California "Forty-niners" had one hundred and fifty members; to-day but eleven are left. XX

This spring the Father entered eighty acres of land and a one-room cabin was built. We called it our home.

"When the curtains of night are pinned back by the stars,
And the beautiful moon leaps the skies,
And the dewdrops of heaven are kissing the rose,
'Tis then that the memory flies.

* * * * * * * *

"Then go where you will, on land or on sea,
I'll share every sorrow and care;
And at night, when I kneel by my bedside to pray,
I'll remember you, love, in my prayer."

In the door of the old cabin home I am standing to-night. It is a rude cabin, but it is our home. I hear the voices as in the long ago; I see the mother as in the days that are gone. I see the path down past the pond, and I hear the croaking of the frogs and the chatter of the blackbirds among the tall rushes; and my heart grows sad with a reminiscent gladness.

This winter Jim, Freck, Margaret, and Will were started to school. The log school-house was a mile and a half away and was built in the woods. The floor was of puncheons, the backless benches were of puncheons with peg legs, and the writing-desk was a puncheon laid on pins in the wall. The wood was whole trees dragged up with four or five yoke of oxen, and the Master (teacher) would appoint big boys to chop the wood. Sometimes on Saturdays the big boys would come and chop a lot of wood.

Many of the scholars were full-grown men and women, and all (except Stew Hay) were members of the Seceder Church, or their parents were members. There was no locking the Master out. The school was opened by

XX To Day; July 4th 1919. There remaineth, But one. 91 years old.
Freck.

PIONEER SCHOOL-HOUSE
PIERCE'S BOYHOOD HOME

the Master reading a chapter in the Testament. The usual studies were reading, writing, spelling, and "figuring"; two or three of the big girls studied grammar. The Master "boarded 'round," dividing the time by the number of scholars. This was a very cold and stormy winter. The wind and the snow came howling down from the northwest, swirling through the chinks in the walls and the roof and covering the floor and the beds with snow; and much sickness prevailed. The school lessons were studied at night, by the light of hickory bark. Hickory bark was the pioneers' coal oil.

Boys in those days had something to do before starting to school. Freck and Will had to drive the cattle to water, a half-mile, and chop great holes in the thick ice on Crooked Creek, and it was often first recess before they reached the school-house; but they were not the only boys, and the Master understood the conditions and there were no tardy-marks. Just before the noon recess and dismissing at night the Master would call, "First class take your places," and the big girls and big boys would line up for the spelling contest. The Master would "give out" the words, and when a word was missed he would call, "Next," and "next" would tackle it.

Stew Hay was long and slim, good-natured and indolent, and twenty; he read in the Second Reader with Freck, and they were boy friends. In the spring of 1851 he joined with Rob Don and Bill Cicel, and Mike gave him a couple of yokes of steers, and they "pulled out" for the "gold-diggings" in California. Whether they ever "pulled in" I know not; for many in the early rush "pulled out" that never "pulled in."

"How dear to the heart is the fond recollection of childhood's connection and innocent joy," and the old log-cabin home! How clearly do I recall those school-boy lessons and the scenes connected therewith! The wide fireplace and the flickering light; the Mother in her low chair, plying her knitting-needles; the Father listening to our reading, and helping us over the hard places.

"The short and simple annals of the poor." No doubt all this is uninteresting to the reader who has not passed along the snow-drifted school path, across the fields, to the log school-house in the woods, and has not sat on the backless puncheon benches and racked his brain and witnessed the agonizing efforts of others to master the hard words in McGuffey's Third Reader and "figure" in fractions; and who has never roasted his face reading by the firelight.

"Oh! were you ne'er a school-boy,
And did you never train,
And feel that swelling of the heart
You ne'er shall feel again?"

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star;
How I wonder what you are."

And the best of all:

"Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went,
The lamb was sure to go."

Ruth was the best scholar and the prettiest girl in school. Her father lived on the western frontier and was an elder in the Seceder Church. The Master's father was also an elder; but the Master's father lived away back in Ohio. The Master's father had come out west and entered each of his three sons eighty acres of "Congress land" and returned to his home in Ohio. The Master was Freck's cousin. At the expiration of the school term the Master returned to his father's house; but before going the Master promised Ruth to return in the fall and build a cabin on his land, and Ruth promised the Master that she would set the cabin in order and keep it in order "until death do us part." But Ruth never set the cabin in order, as the cabin was never built; for the Master never returned. No, the Master never returned! Before the harvest was past and the summer was ended, they folded the Master's hands over his breast, wrapped him in a shroud of snowy whiteness, and laid him in the cold, dark grave.

"Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
Man passeth from life to his rest in the grave.
The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scattered around, and together be laid;
And the young and the old, and the low and the high,
Shall smolder to dust and together shall lie.

"The infant a mother attended and loved,
The mother that infant's affections who proved,
The husband that mother and infant who blessed—
Each, all, are away to their dwelling of rest.
The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in whose eye,
Shone beauty and pleasure, her triumphs are by;
And the memory of those who loved her and praised
Are alike from the minds of the living erased.

"The hand of the King that the sceptre hath borne;
The brow of the priest that the mitre hath worn,
The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave,
Are hidden and lost in the depth of the grave.
The peasant whose lot was to sow and to reap,
The herdsman who climbed with his goats up the steep,
The beggar who wandered in search of his bread,
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

"The saint who enjoyed the communion of Heaven,
The sinner who dared to remain unforgiven,
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.
So the multitude goes, like the flower or the weed
That withers away to let others succeed;
So the multitude comes, even those we behold
To repeat every tale that has often been told.

"For we are the same our fathers have been;
We see the same sights our fathers have seen;
We drink the same stream, and view the same sun,
And run the same course our fathers have run.
The thoughts we are thinking our fathers would think;
From the death we are shrinking our fathers would shrink,
To the life we are clinging they also would cling;
But it speeds for us all like a bird on the wing.

"They loved, but the story we cannot unfold;
They scorned, but the heart of the haughty is cold;
They grieved, but no wail from their slumbers will come;
They joyed, but the tongue of their gladness is dumb.
They died! aye, they died; and we things that are now,
Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,
Who make in their dwelling a transient abode,
Meet the things that they met on their pilgrimage road.

"Yes, hope and despondency, pleasure and pain,
We mingle together in sunshine and rain;
And the smiles and the tears, the song and the dirge,
Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.
'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath,
From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud.
Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

This was President Lincoln's favorite poem. He learned it by heart when a young man. The author's name was William Knox.

CHAPTER V.

The lovely young Spring of 1852 has come, with her dark blue skies and her soft, balmy breath, sweet with the fragrance of the wild cherry and the plum blossoms. The cattle have laid aside their shaggy winter coats, and come up along the paths, lowing and in their sleek summer garments, to sleep at home. The woods are full of song-birds, and flocks of prairie chickens strut around on the hillside and call to each other. And the quiet Sabbath day, in which no work is done, and the white clouds racing along the highway of heaven—all things seem to have combined to make the heart glad.

But in my reminiscences the autumn seems to have been the most soulful season of the year. Nature seemed to hold out her hands, filled with the ripened fruit of summer. The toil and the heat are forgotten, and there is a subdued rattling in the corn as the stalks bow their heads to the autumn breeze; and for the care received they have returned the golden ears of corn. The great red sun zigzags up from behind the rim of the earth and wades through the haze along the smoky sky, and sends his mellow rays shimmering down, flooding the world with a restful melancholy. The long beard on the broad face of the prairie is shaggy and tangled, and the trees have changed their green robes for garments of brown and red and yellow. All nature is in a contented mood. Over yonder on the old dead tree in the edge of the woods, its bare arms stretched in supplication to the sky, the crows in the early morning sit and utter their half plaintive, half defiant "Caw! caw! caw!" And from the dark woods comes back the answering "Caw! caw! caw!" In the woods the squirrels, with cheeks puffed out with nuts which they are storing for the bleak cold days of winter, scamper along the fallen logs.

On the side of the field bordering the woods the timid deer come slipping along, and, stopping to listen, they leap the fence; and when we come to garner the corn, we find only the cob in the husk. Some would set sharpened stakes at the deer-crossings, and when they leaped the fence they would be impaled. But, like Paul, I would eat no meat while the world stands, had I to get it in this way. Of all the animals to which Adam gave names, the little spotted fawn, the baby deer, is the most lovable and innocent. Often in the early morning while seeking the oxen, I have scared one of these from the bed where the mother deer had caused it to hide while she went to breakfast, and it would look up into my face with those great sad eyes and crouch close to the ground. Mother deer often have two fawns, but I never knew one to hide them together. One morning I was driving along, not knowing that anyone was near, when "Bang!" went a gun, and a deer's dying bleat wailed on the still morning air. The hunter was Bill Mart, and I ran over with him to the deer. He had broken its spine; and when I came up, it looked up into my face with the look of a dying child. I could scarce keep back the tears; but Bill opened his long knife and severed the jugular vein. Although I grew to manhood in the midst of these surroundings, I never fired but one shot at a deer in my life—and, thank Heaven! I missed it.

But there were others who took a more realistic view and hunted the deer for food and also for revenue. I had a friend who wished to get married, but did not have the necessary dollar to pay for the license. He lived two miles from town, and one morning at the peep o' day he took his rifle and started in the direction of town, following along in the edge of the woods; for the deer usually, for greater safety, feed near the woods. Spying a bunch, he crawled up and selected a fine buck, and sent a bullet crashing back of the shoulder; for these frontier lads could draw a bead. Divesting it of the unnecessary parts, he slung the buck over his shoulder and wended his way to town, where he exchanged it for a silver dollar, and, going over to the shack called the court-house, he exchanged the dollar for a license to marry Betty—and lived happily ever after.

CHAPTER VI.

At the head of Long Creek there is a lake, called Lone Tree Lake. This lake was far out on the English River Prairie. Evidently, in the long, long ago, there had been a large grove here; but the prairie-fires, coming roaring down year after year, had bitten off bite after bite, until but one lone tree remained—because he was standing boot-top deep away out in the waters of Lone Tree Lake. Some miles below was Lin Grove, and farther on down was Hickory Grove. There were no settlers on Long Creek.

Years ago one settler had built his cabin in Hickory Grove. The lone, deserted cabin was still standing on the bank of the creek, and the spring was still flowing and pouring its waters over the tiny cataract into the creek, and the prairie-fires had left a portion of the fence around the little field. No one seemed to know from whence this man came or wheresoever he went. There was a sort of tradition amongst the oldest settlers on Crooked Creek that he came from the southward; that he drove in across the trackless prairie with two yoke of oxen and his young wife; that his wife had died, and that he had wrapped her in blankets and placed her in the wagon on a bed of hay and drove back to the southward; and that was all. I have stood in the door of that lone, forsaken cabin. There was no floor, no windows; the old stick chimney had tumbled down; the clapboard door was hanging by one wooden hinge; the pole bedstead was standing in the corner. And as I stood in the door and looked in I saw, in my boyish mind, a strong young man and a comely young woman; they were talking cheerfully, and drawing bright pictures of their future, and they were all alive with the hope of a home on the western frontier. Then I looked over on the pole bed, and I saw a rigid, lifeless form. Her hands are crossed on her breast; her eyes are forever closed to the things of life; all her hopes have perished; the door is shut in darkness, and she will never see the consummation of the desire of her heart. And I saw, in my mind (but in my boyish day-dreaming it was real), the husband carry her out and tenderly place her in the wagon, press his tear-wet cheek against her cold face, and then draw the covering and hide her from his sight. Then he turns and takes a last look at the things her hands have touched, and takes up the whip and pilots his oxen, with his dead wife, back over the trackless prairie, over which he and his living wife had so recently passed, filled with hope and hastening forward to build a home on the western frontier.

It is with a feeling of gladness, mingled with sadness, that I recall with what fussy preparations we children made ready for our day's outing, to lay in our winter's supply of hickory nuts. It was four miles to Hickory Grove, and the evening before the corn for the oxen's dinner, the hay to ride on, and a bag for the nuts were placed in the wagon; and the mother has the lunch in the half-bushel measure, for we are to start at the peep o' day. The two little girls, Elizabeth and Isabella (now cut down to "Belle," the wee curly-headed baby girl that the Mother carried in her arms from the deck of the *Red Wing*, who has attained the venerable age of five years), are as greatly exercised as any of us.

The Father comes to the door and calls, "Children, time to prepare for bed!" And we all know the meaning, and quietly take our seats. The Father opens the old Book, in which our names and the dates of our births are recorded, and on the page for "Marriages" appears the Father's and the Mother's names, and the "Deaths" page is blank. The Father reads a chapter and offers up the sacrifice of prayer, and soon the voices all are hushed. In the absence of the Father, the Mother would gather her children about her and read and pray. Our Mother's voice in prayer, how it lingers in our memory! tremulous and low, and pleading—almost a sob. Go where we will, on land or on sea, our Mother's voice in prayer will go with us. And when tossed about by the tempests of life, and temptations and despair hedge us in on every side, and we feel the life-line slipping through our hands, then we hear the Devil whispering, "Let go; let go." But in the midst of the confusion and the turmoil, from away back yonder comes floating down through the years from our cabin home the voice of our Mother saying, "O my Father, guide and keep these children to the end." Then we turn and cry, "Get thee behind me, Satan." The child who has a praying mother, or the husband who has a praying wife, has no excuse for being bad.

When the sun peeped over the rim of the prairie, he saw the Mother and her children and old Duke and Dime half way to Hickory Grove.

Jack Frost had bitten the burrs but lightly, and but few nuts had fallen. The wise and provident little squirrels, knowing that hoary old Winter was getting his chariot ready, had not been idle, and a drove of wild hogs, as wild as the deer and much more fierce, had also been nosing around.

These wild swine started from a few abandoned by the man who drove away to the southward; but the diligence of the wolves had prevented a rapid increase. A wolf is a cunning, sneaking, and cowardly beast. Should two of them, prowling around, find an old mother pig with her little piggies snuggled away between herself and an old log, one of them in his wolfish way would provoke the old mother pig to hump her back and with open mouth make a rush at him, and then he would skip away, and the other would snatch a piggie and gallop off.

We rambled through the wood, passed near the dead woman's cabin, jumped up a bunch of deer, and returned home with some hickory nuts and a big lump of gladness in each breast.

The young people did not permit the time in the winter to drag along and become a burden. Once a week there was singing-school; and there was the monthly debate, now called "literary." And occasionally the wagon-box was placed on the sled and filled with hay, and four prancing horses with jingling bells hitched, and the sled packed so closely that there was not room for one more. The smallish boys would stand on the runners and cling to the edge. And on Hallowe'en the boys would retire; and when the parents were sleeping the sleep of the unsuspicious, they would steal out and away to the place of meeting. And had there been light, there could have been seen some beards through which Time had drawn his paint-brush, but whose wearers were boys again, "just for to-night." Gates were hidden, and rails leaned against the door to bump the head, and boards placed over the chimney, and wagon-wheels hung high in the trees. These things were the flavoring that gave life on the frontier a spicy taste.

This fall (1852) the Father took a sub-contract from Uncle John Don (in those days all elderly people were called "Uncle" and "Aunt") to carry the United States mail from Washington to Bloomfield. This was a 'cross-country horseback mail; the distance was eighty miles, and the round trip had to be made in four days—a ride of forty miles a day. The compensation was four hundred and eighty dollars a year. The boy who rode a mail route on the frontier, sixty-five years ago, was riding on no merry-go-round. It was twelve miles across Dutch Creek Prairie, without a house. Freck rode across this prairie eighty-four times, more than a thousand miles, and met but one horseman and a band of Indians. But the deer were seen scattered over the prairie, and often a wolf would trot alongside of the horse and sniff the sweaty smell. And from the Des Moines River to Fox River Prairie was twenty miles; all the way through dense woods and along a kind of cow-path, over fallen logs and through the brush; and only three cabins on the way. Freck rode through these gloomy woods eighty-four times, a distance of sixteen hundred miles, or forty days, and only met one horseman and one team. Fox River was crossed on a bridge—the only bridge on the route of eighty miles.

The Father heard the voice of the West calling and saying, "It is better farther on." So preparations were made to go forth and seek out and build a home on the western frontier.

In those days of isolated homes the family tie was strong; for their comradeship was with each other. Our Scotch mothers were not demonstrative; they never "mollycoddled" their children. When a baby moved away from babyhood, it moved beyond the occasional kiss. But it was to the Mother we went with our boyish troubles, and it was the Mother who bound up our bruised fingers, meantime scolding us for being so careless. And it was the Mother who taught us to say each night before we closed our eyes in sleep:

"Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;

And should I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take;
And this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen."

And the Mother, by the tender and quiet influence of a mother, impressed on our young minds reverence for God and godly things, which has gone with us all along the journey of life, and unconsciously and unintentionally bound with a silken cord our hearts to home and Mother. And we, in memory, can still hear her voice chiding us for word or act that savored of irreverence or levity. And she would repeat from Robert Burns, the Scotch bard:

"And oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
And mind your duty, morn and night;
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might;
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright."

But the time came to us (and it is the common lot of all) when we no longer could go to Mother with our heartaches.

"We are gathered around the old fireside to-day,
Weary women and tall bearded men;
But the quick tear will start in the steadiest eye
When the old song is sung once again.
There 's a soft, absent look in our Mother's blue eyes,
And her glasses grow misty and dim;
For there 's one who was wont to join in that song
Has joined in the angels' glad hymn.

"Oh, the cheery old song that our Mother would sing!
'Twas a cure for our sorrow and care;
And my heart grows light as in days that are gone
When its tones fall again on my ear.

"There 's a change in that voice, once as clear as the bell,
And her soft hair 's as white as the snow;
For our Mother has long trod the rough paths of life,
And her footsteps grow feeble and slow.
But her love for her sons is as mooring and strong,
And she holds them as lightly and free
As she did when they rocked within sound of her voice,
'Neath the boughs of the old family tree.

"Oh, the cheery old song that our Mother would sing!
'Twas a cure for our sorrow and care;
And my heart grows light as in days that are gone
When its tones fall again on my ear."

Now Freck had never been from home, and he was sixteen years old. Of course he had gone with the Father many times to the Mississippi River, and had been away from Monday morning till Saturday night breaking prairie; but home was "just over yonder." And on Saturday night, when he drove his oxen up in front of the gate, there would be a shout, "Oh, here 's Freck!" and when he unyoked his oxen and stepped inside the gate, the two little sisters would grab him around the legs and look up into his face and both talk at once. Freck did not, at the time, reason it out in this way—in fact, he gave it no actual thought; nevertheless, away down in his sub-consciousness, his home-coming was an ever-present realization. And it is the same with us in after-years: we go out from our home in the morning to perform the tasks of life, and we return in the evening, day after day, and our mind is full of our affairs and we give no actual thought to our home-coming. But, without our knowing it, our sub-consciousness quickens our steps as we draw near our loved ones and our home.

The Father seemed to have no misgivings about going a hundred miles away and entrusting to Freck the carrying out of the terms of the mail contract, and although he would not see him during the life of the contract, the Father seemed to think that Freck knew his duty and would do it. The time drew near for the departure. A little brown mare, named Bett, was bought and turned over to Freck, to be ridden on the mail-route; and Jim harnessed Sam and Jenny to one wagon and the Father strung out the oxen to the other wagon. The Father was not in the habit of multiplying words, and when all were ready to start, he called: "Freck, come here. Now, Freck, should Bett not be able to stand the work, you write me when you will be at the nearest point, and I will send you another horse." And, taking up the whip, he commanded the oxen to go forward. And Freck, holding Bett by the bit, stood by the gate of the old home and watched the procession pass out of sight over the little hill. Now what will you think of Freck, a boy sixteen years old, when I tell you that a great sob rose and lodged in his throat, and he buried his face in Bett's mane and cried like a sick baby? With a lonely "lost boy" feeling, he climbed into the saddle and guided Bett into the path that led down into the woods.

Freck knew every by-path over the hills and all the dark bends along the creek; for many times had he traversed their windings, and often sat on some old mossy log and listened to the voices of the woods, and watched the sun gild the topmost branches of the trees on the hilltop, and listened to the mingled bird-songs and to the rabbit's tread. The woods was Nature's library, and Freck loved to sit in this magnificent room, whose dome was the sky and the walls were where the sky touches the ground.

Over in that plum thicket is where the dogs, Legs and Brin, treed the wild-cat. Some mornings Legs and Brin would come along with Freck after the oxen. Legs was a long-legged half-hound and Brin was a heavy-set, stubnosed, little brindled bulldog. Legs, with his nose to the ground, would gallop off over the hills, and at intervals he would send out a call; but whether it was a cry for help or a wail of joy could not be told. But Brin would tag along at Freck's heels, and when Freck would sit on the old mossy logs and listen for the great ox-bell, and hear only the voices of the woods, Brin would crouch at his feet. This morning Brin must have smelled the battle from afar, for he trotted off after Legs. Soon Legs sent out a cry. There was no mistaking the cry this time. It surely said, "Help! help! help!" Freck hastened across the creek on the drift and along the bank until he came in sight of Legs galloping around in a frenzy of excitement and calling, "Help! help! help!" But Brin was sitting on his haunches with his head on one side, looking into the top of a slim hickory; and there clung the wild-cat. Freck with due caution approached the root of the tree, and looking at Brin, he asked, "Brin, will you stay with me?" And Brin turned his head a little more to one side, which was Brin's way of saying, "Bet yer sweet life I 'll stay with yer." Freck gave the tree a vigorous shake, and the cat hit the ground on the run; but Legs was upon it, and in half a jiffy that cat was on its back, and its legs were flying and its jaws were snapping, and Legs tore himself loose from the cat's embrace and broke for the rear, yelling, "Help! help! help!" But before the cat could adjust itself, Brin came up and poked his nose under its chin, opened and closed his jaws, walked off, crouched on his belly, and rested his jaws on his paws. But he was a sight to behold—great rents torn by the wicked claws of the wild-cat. But there was no whimper from Brin; he rested his jaws on his paws and murmured not.

With a feeling that he had no longer a home to come to, Freck rode away over the lonely mail-route. And the same feeling, many times intensified, like a millstone, is upon his heart to-night. And his heart cries, "I'm alone; I have no longer a home!"

CHAPTER VII.

Freck's midway stopping-place, where he stayed over night going and coming, was at John Mack's, where the trail crossed the Oskaloosa road, near Waugh's Point, an elbow of timber jutting out into Gray's Prairie; seven miles across, without a house. On one of his trips Freck's saddle broke, and he threw it away at Bloomfield and rode the return trip, eighty miles, bareback. At Washington a saddle was to be ready Wednesday morning; but it was not ready. But the mail had to go, so Freck mounted and rode away; making the round trip, one hundred and sixty miles, or, in all, two hundred and forty miles, bareback, that the mail might go. I guess the Father did know that Freck would do his duty.

John Mack was a good-natured, jolly old fellow. Mother Mack was pleasant and kind, and reminded Freck of Mother. Sarah Jane was twenty and cheerful, and sang hymns almost all the time. Sam and Jim and Freck were boy friends.

A boy with a melancholy disposition and a kindly disposed horse, if isolated from their kind and much together, will become greatly attached, and in making these long and lonely trips across the prairies and through the gloomy woods Freck and Bett became real comrades; Freck would talk to Bett, and Bett would make believe that she understood. Freck, to rest Bett, would walk down and up the steep hills and turn Bett loose on the trail; but Bett never left Freck, but would wait for him to come up. But the horse (and I will include the boy) falls far short of the dog in constancy. The most faithful friend on earth is the dog. A friend may prove false, a child unreliable; a wife may desert and go off with another; but the dog never fails. A man's dog stays with him to the bitter end. A cruel and drunken master may kick and cuff and starve his dog; the faithful and famishing beast will crawl off and seek a bone, return to his cruel master, crouch at his feet, and lick his hand.

One day as Freck was coming along the trail, in the thick brushy river hills, he came face to face with Jim. Jim had fetched Jenny to exchange for Bett, to give Bett a rest. Freck learned that the folks had settled on Bowen's Prairie, near Clark's Point, on the Big Cedar, two days' ride west of the place of meeting. In thirty minutes from their meeting, the saddles were changed and Jim was riding Bett to the westward and Freck was riding Jenny to the northward; so they passed from each other's sight, each to perform the duties of life.

One day when Freck rode to the top of a hill, in the middle of Dutch Creek Prairie, he rode right into a band of Indians. They were strung along the trail for half a mile, and it was a mighty lonely place for a boy to meet a band of Indians alone; but Freck turned out of the trail and gave them the right of way, and they passed on.

The North Skunk River was forded below Warner's Mill dam, and often the river would be at flood tide; Freck would remove the saddle and turn his horse into the flood, and she would swim across, and the miller would tie her and ferry Freck and the mail over in his "dugout."

The South Skunk River was a deep, sluggish stream, and was crossed on a rope ferry. Old man McEwing and his white-haired wife lived in a rude cabin among the trees on the bank of the river, and the nearest neighbor was three miles away. The old man was still a hunter and a trapper, and made an excuse of running the ferry for living so far away. But not a score of teams crossed during the summer, and because the old man's eyesight had failed, and his nerves were not so steady, and the deer and wild turkey were more watchful, the old couple many times went to bed supperless. At times Freck would come to the bank and shout and wait, but the old man would be out looking for the supper they didn't have last night, and Freck would see the sun moving along the sky and see the winding trail stretching away before him. Then Freck would throw the mail-bag around his neck to keep it out of the water, and remove his feet from the stirrups so that he could not bear his weight on one side and turn his horse bottom side up, should he lose his head, and Jenny would plunge off the landing-logs and go under all but her head, and the water would come up around Freck's armpits; but she would come to the top and pull for the shore. Now, had Freck been thrown from the saddle, he would have gone to the bottom like a green elm log; for he couldn't swim a rod.

Freck crossed the Des Moines River two miles above Ottumwa, the county seat of Wapello County, at Overton's Ferry.

All mail for the interior was delivered by steamboats at points along the Mississippi River, and was carried back along certain lines by four-horse stages; for there were no railroads west of the Mississippi River in those days, and it was some fifteen years later before a railroad ventured to cross the State.

An old-time four-horse Concord stage ran out from Burlington, through Mount Pleasant, Fairfield, Agency City (so named because an Indian agency was here), Ottumwa, Eddyville, Oskaloosa, and on up to Fort Dodge, on the border and a kind of Indian town. The early-day drivers of those four-horse Concord stages were personages of vast importance; they carried a great tin horn, which was blown long and loud when entering a town or starting down a big hill. And when the country boy, trudging along by the side of the oxen, heard this horn, he would make frantic efforts to get his oxen out of the way before the great lumbering stage, swaying from side to side, came thundering down the hill.

CHAPTER VIII.

John Mack's folks were "United Brethren," and in the fall there were meetings of this denomination in the school-house. One evening Mother Mack, Sarah Jane, Sam, and Jim were going to meeting, and Sarah Jane persuaded Freck to go along. Now Freck was sixteen, and had never attended meetings other than Seceder meetings in all his life. Conscience said, "Freck, don't go," but Sarah Jane said, "Freck, do come," and Freck went. Mother Mack tried to persuade John to go, but he wouldn't. You see, someone had trodden on John's toe. John hadn't gone off with the goats, but he refrained from feeding with the sheep, and went limping around on the range by himself.

Before the preaching there was "experience meeting." Now in our Seceder meetings no one talks but the minister; but here old and young, men and women, rose up and talked out loud. Freck was astounded at this unseemly conduct in the meeting-house. Even Mother Mack and Sarah Jane had something to say. And Freck had thought them good people. When a tall, spare woman near Freck rose up and, with tears running down her cheeks, said, "My sins are all taken away," and an old bald-headed man cried, "Yes! yes! Bless the Lord! His blood cleanseth from all sin," Freck's astonishment gave place to indignation, and he was ready to hold the garments of those who would fling the stones.

But the climax of unholy disorder was reached when the meeting was dismissed. In our Seceder meetings, when the minister held up his hand, we all stood with bowed heads; and when he said, "Go with each one to their respective places of abode. Amen," we all filed out in silence. If a friend was recognized, it was with a slight inclination of the head. Sometimes, in passing out, a boy would sneak a sidelong glance, and the girl would blush, and the boy would look foolish. But here they mingled and talked and shook hands and laughed out loud in the meeting-house. Freck slipped out with a feeling of condemnation. But presently Sarah Jane came up and in her cheery way, just like at home and hadn't been to meeting at all, said, "Well, Freck, I 'm ready to see you home," and began to talk about such a good meeting; then suddenly, she asked, "Freck, how did you enjoy the meeting?" Just then Sam and Jim and other boys raced past, and Freck galloped off with them, leaving the question unanswered and Sarah Jane to walk home alone.

John and Freck, by different ways and from different motives, reached the same decision—namely, to attend these meetings no more. Jolly old John died the next summer. Whether his toe had healed I know not; but it is doubtful, because he refused to use the remedy. And you know that in bad cases it was to be used "seventy times seven."

Just as the hand of Morning was painting the eastern sky with streaks of red, and making the nooks and corners to the westward look dark and suspicious, Freck rode out of Bloomfield. The murky sky was hanging close to the ground, and the morning was gloomy and threatening. Just as he gained the summit of the Fox River hill, the sun rose from his couch, and with a red and watery eye he took one hasty look at the cheerless world, pulled down the cloud curtains, and shut himself in. A fleet of dark clouds were slipping noiselessly along overhead, wearing a foreboding countenance, and by the time Freck had crossed Fox River Prairie, the clouds, like a great tent, had closed down to the ground and a cold, drizzly fall rain had set in.

Freck rode into the dark, gloomy Soap Creek woods; the rain pattering down and dripping from his dejected hat into the back of his neck, and his horse sinking fetlock deep into the soft ground. Rivulets of muddy water ran down the hillsides, and when he rode into Big Soap Creek, there was a streak of muddy water on each side; he drew rein in the clear streak, but Jenny shook her head and refused to drink. The chilly rain drenched the sodden earth, and the jostled bushes by the side of the trail sent down showers of big drops on Freck and Jenny. Freck and Jenny plodded on, hour after hour and mile after mile, sloshing through the miry sloughs and wading the overflowing streams, through the dense woods for twenty miles; and no face nor form of human being was seen. Freck and Jenny were just one little cog in the great wheel of the postal system of the United States of America.

CHAPTER IX.

Uncle Don and Aunt Martha were Campbellites, and lived on a farm two miles from town. Uncle Don said, "Freck, when the folks move away, I will feed you and your horse for your work Monday and Tuesday." So Freck's home was with Uncle Don and Aunt Martha three days in each week.

One Monday morning, while the stars were shining and the frost was glistening, Uncle Don and Freck yoked the big dun oxen and pulled out for Bunker's Mill, on English River, twenty miles across the prairie, without a house on the way. At night they spread their blankets on the mill floor and, listening to the rumbling of the mill and the rushing of the water, they fell asleep. At three in the morning the miller cried, "Your grist is ground." And giving the oxen an early breakfast, they started for home.

Many times the settlers would go twenty miles to mill, and the wheel would be frozen fast; then they would have to fetch the unground grain home and wait for a thaw. Meantime corn and wheat would be ground on the coffee-mill, and many meals were eaten without a morsel of bread. How little do the present generation know of the hardships and the privations endured by the early settlers on the western frontier!

One Saturday evening Freck carried the mail-bag in at the rear side door and delivered it to the postmaster—for the last time; for the end had come. And he rode out past the old home to Uncle Don's for the last time; and on Monday morning he bade Uncle Don and Aunt Martha good-bye for the last time, and mounted his horse and rode away to seek his Father's house. Abraham went out from his father's house not knowing whereseever he was going. Freck knew that he should go to Bowen's Prairie, near Clark's Point, on Big Cedar, and that was all; but no fear of the result disturbed his mind. And the lovely smoky fall weather, with the sun shimmering down through the haze, and the wide prairies dotted with the late wild sunflowers—all things combined to make the heart of a boy throb with gladness. All the first day Freck trotted along with a song in his heart; and the refrain was, "I'm going home! I'm going home!"

Freck, as boy and man, was of a hopeful nature and loved to look on the silver lining of the dark cloud; but, as boy and man, without any earthly cause therefor, a wave of melancholy sadness would come creeping higher and higher, until it would roll over him, shutting out the sunshine and the gladness. And while in the clutches of this melancholy, as boy and as man, he was a double (I despair of making myself understood), seemingly a real invisible sub-conscious Freck; and they would accuse or excuss each other. And, as boy and as man, while under the spell of this depression, the fountain of tears would fill to the brain, and a pebble would send the waves flowing over at the low places all along the banks. Now, I account for it in this way: Undoubtedly there was, away back yonder along the ancestral trail, a sweet and gentle woman from whose pleasant and happy life the bright star of hope had been suddenly blotted out, and evermore thereafter her frail bark was tossed about on the waves of the Sea of Despair. And from her troubled life she paid out a silken cord of hereditary melancholy sadness; the silken cord had touched at transmitting stations, and Freck, at the end of the line, received the sad and tender messages.

The second day, at noon, Freck was ferried over the Des Moines River and rode away into the brushy hills; mile after mile, the little mare picked her steps along the stumpy trail. The big red sun with much labor was pushing his way through the smoky atmosphere toward the place of his going down; there was a foreboding murmuring of the wind in the tree-tops, the trees shook their heads and whispered, and the wind sobbed; the turtle-dove cooed her mournful coo; the sun hid his face behind the tallest trees; and the little mare with drooping head slowly passed along the lonely trail. And not a sound of human voice or sign of human habitation since crossing the river. The silken cord began to vibrate, and Freck's heartstrings felt the tingling touch of sadness; the fountain was filling up, and there was a constricting of the throat. Freck feared to look at the great red sun, who seemed to be making haste to get beyond the gloomy woods before the darkness set in, lest the fountain should overflow the banks. Suddenly, as clear as a bell and as sweet as an angel's, came the voice of a woman in song. And the song pebble sent the waves over the banks all along. A portion of the song got tangled in Freck's heartstrings, and has remained tangled until this day. The first words were clear, but Freck had never heard them:

"How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see!
Sweet prospects; sweet birds, and sweet flowers
Have all lost their sweetness with me."

Then the voice sank into a murmur. A bend in the trail brought Freck facing a little cabin and a little field, the corn shocked around the deadened trees and tied with bark. A woman was passing out and in at the door of the cabin, performing her evening work; stepping in, her voice would be but a murmur, and coming out, it was clear and sweet.

> "Scattering precious seed by the wayside;
> Scattering precious seed on the hillside;
> Scattering precious seed o'er the fields wide;
> Scattering precious seed by the way."

This woman knew not that she was scattering precious seed in the heart of a lonely, homesick boy that would abide with him "even down to old age." Several years passed before Freck again heard the song; but when he did, the great red sun, the stumpy trail, the little cabin, the lonely, homesick boy with the tears trinkling down his face, and the angel voice of the woman, all passed before him in the twinkling of an eye.

When Freck came out of the woods onto Sunrise Prairie, the silken cord had ceased to vibrate and the fountain had subsided within its banks, and he was seeing the silver lining and humming the new song. He rode on a few miles and stopped at a cabin and stayed over night. An old man and his old wife lived here all alone. Their children had married and left them. They had gone forth to do as their parents had done: to build homes, and toil through the heat and the cold storms of winter; to walk the floor at the midnight hour, caring for sons and daughters, and be left alone in their old age. These dear old people (for Freck remembers them as such) were kind to Freck and made him feel that he was a boy of affairs, because he had remained from home so long and had performed the task entrusted to his care. These dear old people—yes, I remember their names: his first name was the same as that of the disciple who sat at the place of toll, and his last was the same as that of the northwest county of Missouri; her name was the same as Mrs. George Washington's. They confided to Freck that they were Seceders—or, rather, that the dear old lady was, and that the old man had been for more than fifty years. But, alas! someone had set his foot on the old man's toe, and after feeding with the flock in pastures green and by the still waters for fifty years, he was now browsing along the hedges where the pasture was short and the water was bad. And he justified his course: because a man wholly unfit had been elected a ruling elder; because he was ambitious to wear the bell; and because he was the minister's father-in-law. And when Freck was just falling into a boyish sleep, the Devil tiptoed to the side of the bed and whispered: "Freck, I'll bet you that the old man wanted to wear the bell himself."

In the morning Freck bade the dear old folks good-bye for the last time. In the evening he rode up to his Father's house, and there was a glad meeting. The Mother said: "Well, Robbie, how you have changed!" Soon Freck went down to the barn to see Bett, never doubting that Bett would be overjoyed to see him; but when he put his arms around her neck and rubbed his face against her nose and called her by name, she gave no sign of recognition, but munched her hay and cared nothing for the old times. And Freck felt disappointed and hurt. But not so with old Shep. He bounded from his bed in the hay, and put his arms around Freck's neck and licked his hands and his face, and said, just as plainly as a dog could say it: "Oh, Freck! Freck! I'm so glad you have come home!"

There was a double cabin on Bowen's Prairie, and Uncle John and Aunt Anna lived in one of them. Aunt Anna was the Mother's sister, and no boy has had a better aunt. Aunt Anna had four boys, and John and Freck were boy chums. Aunt Anna's only daughter had married Tom Hend, and they lived over on Pleasant Divide, near the Seceder country meeting-house, with a graveyard at the back. It was four miles to the meeting-house, but we went to meeting every Sabbath, and stayed for two long sermons. At intermission, the time between sermons, the horses and oxen were given their corn, and the people would stand around and quietly eat some bread and cheese, and some would talk over the sermon, and then all string off down to the spring and one by one drink from the same gourd. In the long summer afternoons the neighing of the horses (for the woods were full of horses, as the people came from afar, in ~~wagons and carts~~ and horseback) would float in through the open windows, and Freck, in a kind of dream, would hear them calling: "Freck! Freck! Come down into the cool, shady woods. Don't you hear the voices? The wind is whispering to the trees, and the trees are smiling, and the birds are singing, and the squirrels are waiting and wondering why you don't come." Freck would dream on, and listen to the voices, and hear only the droning of the minister's voice.

The Father said: "Freck, you and Will can take charge of the oxen." And Freck placed the yokes just as though he had not been helping carry on the affairs of the United States for a year. Freck and Will cut out the year, and tied the broken ends of the thread of their lives, and kept step with the oxen, and gathered the flowers of boyish gladness lying all along their path. And all through the passing years they toiled on side by side, sharing the same bed at home and the same blankets on their trips to the Mississippi River. But they came to the parting of the way. For a long time, without warning, there would come over Freck an impulse to mount his horse and ride off along the old lonely and familiar mail-route; and the "Jingle! jingle! jingle!" of the iron lock on the iron staple would sound in his brain like sweet music, as when he trotted along the trail across the wide prairies or through the lonely woods. Why was this?

In the evening, when Uncle John was absent, we children would gather around Aunt Anna's fireside, and she would tell us tales of the wars of Scotland: Flodden Field, where ten thousand brave Scotsmen lay dead on the dark and bloody moor, and the battle of Bannockburn. Bannockburn! The very name makes the pulse of a Scotsman beat a little quicker. Bannockburn, where forty thousand sons of Scotland, with King Robert Bruce at their head, held at bay and put to rout more than a hundred thousand of King Edward's chosen English soldiers. Again and again did Edward hurl his ten thousand mailed horsemen against the solid wall of Scotish spears; again and again they were rolled back, until the channel of the Bannockburn was filled to heaping, and the Scotch army passed over on a bridge of the dead and the dying. And with spear and battle-axe they followed the fleeing Edward, who left thirty thousand dead on the field of Bannockburn. Aunt Anna would tell of Mary, Queen of Scots; of Sir William Wallace, the brave; and of John Resby, a disciple of Wickliffe, who was burned alive at Perth, the first martyr in Scotland. Freck's mother's father's name was Robert McConnaha, and from generation to generation a tradition has come down that six McConnahs brothers, each more than six feet tall, with spear and battle-axe, marched three on the right hand and three on the left hand of Robert Bruce, the good King of Scotland. And after the sanguinary battle of Bannockburn, four of these brothers lay dead on the battlefield.

The Mother and Aunt Anna were born on the frontier in the big woods of western Pennsylvania, and grew to womanhood in the midst of toil and privation. There were six sisters and one brother; the brother was born last, after the home had been carved out of the dense forest. The son inherited the farm and occupied it until a year ago. And Robert the father and Robert the son plowed the same fields for one hundred and thirteen years, and now Robert the son and grandson is turning the same furrows.

Freck's grandfather was born in 1767, his grandmother in 1777, and they were married in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1797. In 1795 the Shenango Indians ceded their land, and the land was opened for settlement in 1796. Michael Marshall and Hugh Fletcher were the first white men to settle in the Shenango country. They "came in" in 1796, and in 1797 Freck's grandfather "came in." John Gallagher and John Ewing "came in" on foot, carrying their possessions and a peck of salt apiece on their backs. In 1798 James Dickey traded a gun and a powder-horn and a blanket for one hundred acres of land.

On this wise Freck's grandparents "came in": They owned a horse and a side-saddle. The plunder was made into two bundles and placed across the saddle, and Grandmother (who had just slipped past twenty) took her seat in the saddle. Grandfather, axe in hand, went before, and where the brush was too thick he chopped a path. So they came into the land of the Shenangos. A cabin was built and the big trees were cut down and an opening was made in the forest, through which the sun shone on the ground. The horse was exchanged for a yoke of oxen, and the big logs were rolled together into heaps and burned. Year by year the opening was made a little larger, and corn and beans and other stuff planted among the stumps and the roots. The flax was planted, pulled, scutched, hackled, spun, and wove, and the wool was hand-carded and made into garments. The sheep, the calves, and the pigs were guarded from the wolves and the bears, and the children from the panthers; but, with all the care, many lambs pigs, and calves were carried off, and once a child was carried away by a panther, and only bits of her dress were found. The years multiplied, and the children increased in number and in stature, and each from infancy put forth every energy to induce the clay soil to yield the full ear on the stalks; but with the unremitting encouragement given, the stubborn soil repaid the husbandman and his children only in "nubbins."

But the dark forest treated the early settlers more kindly and with greater generosity. It was liberal in the bestowal of savory meats—bear meat, coon, groundhog, squirrel, and wild turkey. Powder and balls were not plentiful, and traps and snares of many kinds were brought into use. For the wild turkey a log pen was built and covered with brush; a trench was dug, leading under one side and terminating abruptly in the inside of the pen, and grain was strewn in the trench; the turkeys would follow along and hop into the pen, and when they wanted to come out, they always looked up, and never saw the trench. A favorite bear-trap was to place two large logs side by side, with a narrow space between; over the space a log was suspended on a baited trigger, and when the bear crept in and pulled the bait, down came the log on his back.

Grandfather and Grandmother spent a lifetime of toil in clearing a place in the dark forest for the sun to shine through, and in rearing a family of six upright and God-fearing daughters and one son; and four of those daughters wore out their lives on the western frontier. The son inherited the farm; from which they had not been two score miles since Grandfather, a young man, and Grandmother, a girl wife, had dismounted and removed the bundles from the back of the horse, and built their first cabin.

Most of the early settlers in the Shenango country were Seceders, and were Scotch or of Scotch ancestry; so it was not long until a church was organized. The earliest record is dated March 30, 1801. But no doubt these hardy pioneers met, and the Psalms of David were sung and prayers were offered in these dark woods, much earlier.

The first minister was a young man, Rev. Daniel McLean. He "came in" in 1800, and stopped with Michael Marshall; the meat served at meals was raccoon. The preaching was in the cabins and the woods until 1804; then a log meeting-house was built. In 1818 a frame meeting-house was built; the first frame building in the Shenango country. The church records show that the congregation agreed to pay the Rev. Daniel McLean the sum of one hundred and thirty-five pounds, Pennsylvania currency, a year. The Rev. Daniel McLean served this people for fifty-five years. For fifty-five years he administered to them the sacrament of the Lord's supper, he buried their dead, he baptized their babies, and many of these babies he united in marriage and baptized their babies. He it was who united the Father and the Mother, and Uncle John and Aunt Anna, and baptized all their children save one. He stood up in the pulpit in the frame meeting-house, which he had occupied for thirty-seven years, and preached a tender farewell sermon; and thirty days thereafter he was laid to rest in the old Seceder graveyard, back of the old meeting-house.

In 1844 Grandmother bade an eternal farewell to the scenes of her earth life, and in 1847 Grandfather laid down his burdens, and they sleep side by side in the old Seceder graveyard from which they helped to clear the trees in the long, long ago.

When the Son of Man shall come in the clouds of heaven, with His holy angels, and the trump of God, to call His sleeping saints, what a host of sturdy old Christian pioneers will come forth from this old Shenango burying-ground!

CHAPTER X.

Jimmy Marley! Jimmy Marley was an honest and upright young man of forty. No one ever thought of saying, "Good morning, Mr. Marley," but all, old and young, men and women, would say, "Good morning, Jimmy Marley." Jimmy Marley was also a "Forty-niner." All those who rushed off to the California "gold-diggings" were called "Forty-niners." His friends whispered that he returned with fifteen hundred dollars in gold, and in those days fifteen hundred dollars was a fabulous sum. But Jimmy Marley neither by word nor deed referred to his wealth. He wore homespun, and came to the table in his shirt-sleeves, ate with his knife, poured his coffee into the saucer, and placed the cup in the little dish provided for the purpose—

just like we did. But Jimmy Marley did take pleasure in saying, "Boys, I went to the diggings by ship, around the Horn." But we knew not the meaning of "around the Horn." And he loved to tell about the "Dutch Flats," and the rough life—the gambling, the shooting, the stabbing, and the hanging of men for robbing sluice-boxes. Then Jimmy Marley would sing a song, "Oh, those days of old, those days of gold, those days of forty-nine!"

In after years Freck passed through the "Dutch Flats," the scene of the California "diggings" of the early days. Many of the old miners' cabins were still standing, and Chinamen were panning the old dumps. Over the mountain-side lay the old tapering pipes used in hydraulic mining. And the mountain-sides were torn and trees rooted up and great rocks hurled to the gulch below by the mighty force of the water. Smaller trenches were dug with pick and shovel. While standing in the midst of the old ruins of the "Dutch Flats," Freck, in his mind, as he has since seen them with eyes wide open, saw men running to and fro, half clad and covered with mud, carrying dirt in bags to the streams and panning out the glittering grains of gold, and carefully placing them in the buckskin bag and putting the bag in their bosom. And Freck, in his mind, saw the miners coming over the mountains and out of the deep dark gulches, wending their way toward the camp. They would clean up a bit, and prepare their supper; then they would examine the buckskin bag and place it near the heart. (This is no dream.) And then, some boldly and defiantly, others timidly and hesitatingly, they would turn their faces toward the "Monarch Saloon and Dance Hall," and some boldly, others timidly, would walk up to the bar and pass the glittering grains of gold for liquid damnation and a ticket for the dance. And the noisy galop and the frenzied waltz go right on. Over in that corner men are seated around a rough table, and piles of gold-dust are stacked on a buckskin. And on the wall is a placard, on which is rudely pencilled: "STUD HOSS POKER." The "stud-hoss" poker queen sits on a kind of throne, arrayed in gorgeous apparel; and deals the cards—to her favorites from the bottom. (And this is no dream, either.) There! Did you hear that shot? Did you see the gleam of that dagger? I wonder was it my old school-mate Stew Hay they dragged out? Well, he sure was a mother's boy. And when the sun and the stars and the light of day were growing dim, that mother was still wondering, "Oh! where is my boy to-night?"

Jimmy Marley built the first frame house on Bowen's Prairie. One morning Jimmy Marley placed two chairs in the wagon, sat down in one, and drove across Miller's Creek, up through the woods onto Pleasant Divide, and up to the horse-block; and Jane came walking down the path to the gate. Jane was Mr. and Mrs. Port's oldest daughter. Jane would take no part in the crowded sled-rides, behind the jingling bells and prancing horses, because, Jane said, a girl's place was at home helping mother; and Jane had stayed at home all of her thirty-five years. Jimmy Marley, in his deep bass voice, said, "Good morning, Jane." And Jane, in her girlish treble, said, "Good morning, Jimmy Marley." Jimmy Marley clucked to his horses and turned toward the minister's house, and the minister said, "Jimmy Marley, do you take Jane to be your lawful wedded wife?" And Jimmy Marley, in his deep bass voice, answered, "Yes, sir; I do." "Jane, do you take Jimmy Marley to be your lawful wedded husband?" And Jane, in her girlish treble, answered, "Yes, sir; if you please."

The cold winter, with its many storms, passed by, and the days had been spent in the timber, getting out rails. Just as the lovely Spring of 1854 gave notice that she was coming to Bowen's Prairie, the Father sold out and moved five miles, onto Half-way Prairie, into Deer Grove. This summer Freck and Will were sent out with six yoke of oxen and the great breaking-plow, with a beam ten feet long and rigged on wheels, with a long lever to gauge the depth. The Father said, "Boys, come home Saturday to attend meeting." And, regardless of the distance, they would point their leaders home, and, perched on the long plow, they would sing their boyish songs, and were happy. It is not wealth nor ease that makes the happy and contented boy. In the fall they were put to "teaming" from the Mississippi River, camping out; they could make the trip in two weeks. Freck was eighteen and Will was fourteen. But this is the kind of training boys with energetic fathers received on the western frontier.

Burlington was built along the river front, and the freight was unloaded from steamboats into warehouses built on stilts out into the river. Long teams of oxen blocked the levee, each striving to be next at the door to receive their freight, to be hauled away back into the interior. The shouts of the drivers were loud, and there was locking of hubs, and mixing up of oxen, and an exchange of bad words, and sometimes there would be bloody noses. The roads followed up the ravine and wound around the points of the hills, seeking the easiest grade to the top of the river bluffs. And this is the way we got out of Burlington sixty years ago.

The Father during the winter would sell his broken oxen, and ride around in the different settlements and buy unbroken steers, to be paid for the next summer in breaking prairie. This winter the Father pushed Freck to the front, to ride away and buy and sell and trade. And Freck began to feel the twinges of a man's ambition and a man's responsibility.

The pleasant, smoky, hazy fall days, with the labor and the pleasure, the sorrow and the gladness, the buying and the selling, unnoticed passed by and slipped over the precipice of Time and rolled down into the Ocean of the Past. The young and robust Winter gathered December in his icy arms and came blustering and howling down across the prairies and blew his cold breath through the woods, and the trees swayed and trembled, and cried in angry tones and in pleading moans, "Let us have peace!" But the young giant was proud of his strength, and in fiendish pleasure he sent the snow in blinding sheets and piled it in great drifts, and at the sight of the suffering he shrieked in very gladness. The snow settled, the sleighing was good, the cold moonlight was clear, and the prancing horses, the jingling bells, and the happy young voices were all mixed up with the cold wintry air; for life on the frontier was not wholly a sand-drifted desert.

There is no suffering like unto the suffering of a bashful boy, and Freck in company was simply silly. The happy voices, the jingling bells, and the prancing horses would halt before a cabin door. They would open the exercises of the evening by playing plays, such as "Who 's got the button" or "I 'll never lend you my hackle again." When the old folks would spend the evening with a neighbor (and they generally started when they heard the merry voices and the jingling bells; for had they permitted dan-ing, they would have been "haled" before the Church Session), then an old fiddle would be dug out from among the wraps, and "Twang-twang" and "Thrum-thrum" the strings would go, and the sweet strains of "Old Dan Tucker" or "Money Musk" would be squeezed out by a frowzy-headed boy. At times John would goad Freck to desperation. When "Much Talk," standing with his back to the fire, would give the command, "Choose your partners," Freck, with his brain in a whirl, would make a blind dash and grab the first girl he came to, and line up; and when "Much Talk" would speak the words that started the feet to pounding the puncheons, Freck, like a cow-pony on the lariat the first time, would start off on the gallop; and when all tangled up, the girls in a half whisper would call, "Here, Freck, here! Here, Freck, here!" and they would lead him toward the trail of "All hands 'round," "Gents to the center," "First couple forward and back," and in the hurdle race, "Promenade all," they headed him away from the wire fence; and when "Much Talk" would command, "Swing your partners," Freck, in confusion, would likely grab the nearest boy and give him a whirl. Notwithstanding all this, the girls made believe they enjoyed tripping along over the puncheons, while he cantered along half the time out of the trail.

CHAPTER XI.

Sister Lucy—everyone in the settlement called her "Sister Lucy." Sister Lucy had great dreamy blue eyes, and a low, soft voice, and a kind and cheerful word for everyone. Sister Lucy was not fussy, she didn't speak in meeting every Sunday; but Sister Lucy never flew mad nor sulked. And it was conceded that if there were two good women, Sister Lucy was one of them. Joe was Sister Lucy's husband. He was big and careless, with long yellowish hair, and his cheeks were overgrown with tangled whiskers. Joe was always going to do things—to-morrow; to-morrow he would mend the cabin roof; to-morrow he would remove the zigzag rail fence and build a split picket fence with a gate in front of the door; and to-morrow he sure would put rockers on Sister Lucy's low chair; but six new years had been born and died of old age, and Joe's to-morrow had not found the way in. Joe was subject to "rheumatiz," and Sister Lucy was apprehensive of Joseph's health (Sister Lucy always called him "Joseph," with a lingering soft accent), and when the snow and the hail beat against the roof, Sister Lucy would say: "No, no, Joseph; you must not go out in this storm." And Sister Lucy would pin the old faded shawl over her head and feed the stock, pitch the wood over the zigzag fence, fetch the water from the spring, and split the kindling. Some of the neighbors would say: "It is because of Joe's thoughtlessness. Poor Sister Lucy!" And others said: "It is because of Joe's danged laziness. Poor Sister Lucy!"

It is December, 1854, and it is ten years since Joe led Sister Lucy to the altar, and it is more than six years since Sister Lucy, coming in from the old churchyard, where she had placed flowers on two tiny graves, threw her arms around her mother's neck and, with tear-blinded eyes and choking voice, sobbed, "Good-bye, mother." She took one more lingering look at the scenes of her childhood and her girlhood, from which she had not been a score of miles in all her life; then, taking little Lucy, her first-born, by the hand, she started out with Joseph to seek out and build for themselves a home on the western frontier. But Sister Lucy, with her cheerful and hopeful temperament, could not remain long in a state of gloom, and as they drove along the river road, to board a steamboat for the West, she hummed those little songs so common at the time:

"A cot in the valley, a hut in the grove,
A home in the wildwood with the one that I love.
I care not how humble, how lowly it be,
If one faithful heart only share it with me."

And she gave Joseph's arm a little squeeze. They found the valley on the frontier all right, and they had built the cabin in the grove, but the romantic soul-rest that Sister Lucy's dreamy imagination had painted in among the trees and the flowers in the wildwood she had not found. Nor will it ever be found until the sons and daughters of Adam gather in the Paradise of God.

As her custom was, Sister Lucy arose on this December morning and prepared the breakfast and the children and called Joseph. The young giant Winter was in a riotous frame of mind, and he swirled the snow and swayed the trees and howled around the corners of the cabin. Joe's "rheumatis" was middling bad; so Sister Lucy fetched a basin of warm water and a towel and held it until Joe splashed the water over his arms and his face, over the hearth, and over Sister Lucy's dress. And she combed his long yellowish hair, and let her arm slip around his neck, and touched her soft cheek against his long hairy jowl. Then they gathered around the table, and the children folded their hands while Sister Lucy bowed her head and said grace. Then Sister Lucy slipped from her place and rummaged in the little corner cupboard and fetched out cups and jars with some jellies and butters and preserves, remnants left over from the time the last baby was born, and scraped it all onto Joseph's plate. Joe opened the door and looked out into the swirling snow; but Sister Lucy caught his arm, saying: "No, no, Joseph; you must not go out into this storm. Give me your coat; for you know that I don't have the rheumatism." Sister Lucy stuffed one of her old skirts and some grain-bags between the logs to keep out the snow. And the children talked in whispers; for Sister Lucy had taught them from babies that a noise would make Joseph's rheumatism worse. Sister Lucy slipped into Joe's coat and pinned the old faded shawl over her head, and bending to meet the storm, she went forth to feed the stock, fetch water from the spring, and pitch the wood over the fence.

Now, the baby was not a rag-doll baby, but a real little flesh-and-blood baby, and if Sister Lucy must slosh around in the snow and get her feet all soppy in the day, the baby must wake in the night and cry and fret and sob, with a pain its little stomach. Sister Lucy arose, and, with baby under one arm, she replenished the fire, brewed a pot of catnip tea, and induced baby to partake thereof; placing it across her arms, she swayed forward and backward (for Joe had not put on the rockers), and baby, like a tiny boat on a tiny sea, gently rolled and slept. As Sister Lucy sat alone in the flickering firelight, the wind swirling down the wide chimney and the snow sizzling in the fire, in her low, plaintive voice she softly sang:

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky."

At the end of each verse, in a lower and softer tone, just like she was talking to baby and herself and someone else, she would sing the refrain:

"I 'm glad salvation 's free!
Salvation 's free for you and me;
Oh, I 'm glad salvation 's free!"

As Sister Lucy swayed and sang baby's little rigid form became limp, and Sister Lucy cuddled it under her chin and sang:

"Oh, I 'm glad salvation 's free for you and me!"

The next morning Sister Lucy arose and built the fire and prepared breakfast; the children folded their hands while Sister Lucy bowed her head and said grace. Then, in an apologetic way, she said: "Joseph, I guess I'll have to lie down for a while; my head feels queer." So she crept in among the covers, and Little Lucy removed her mother's shoes and took charge of the baby. Sister Lucy slept, and when she awoke her head still felt queer, and there was a severe chill, followed by a raging fever. At times Sister Lucy would talk with her mother, at times repeat portions of her school lessons, and at times she would sing:

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify.
Oh, I 'm glad salvation 's free!"

In the evening Joe brewed a pot of boneset tea, and Sister Lucy drank the bitter stuff. The snow drifted through the clapboard roof, and Joe spread the faded shawl over the head of the bed and a chair, to keep it from from falling into Sister Lucy's face. The storm raged and shrieked around the corners of the cabin, and howled in the swaying tree-tops, but Sister Lucy knew it not; she slept a busy, restless sleep. At times she was in the old home with her mother. Then she would repeat:

"A home in the wildwood with the one that I love."

And again, in a sweet and almost childish voice, she would sing:

"A charge to keep I have.
I 'm glad salvation 's free for you and me!
Oh, I 'm glad salvation 's free!"

And Joe, with drawn face and dry, burning eyes, watched through the stormy night.

The night (as all nights do, whether we are in the gilded saloon, filled with music and dancing, or stand alone, with bleeding heart, by the bedside of our dying loved ones, in the lonely log cabin), hour by hour, wore away, and the harbingers of the coming day cried, "Behold, the morning cometh!" The storm had spent its fury, and with sullen and angry growls it rolled far out on the snow-drifted prairie, with the mercury registering twenty-five degrees below zero. Joe ran over to Mr. Brown's and asked, "Will you go for the doctor? Sister Lucy is very sick." Mr. Brown saddled his horse quickly and rode away into the cold gray morning, twelve miles through the unbroken snow-drifts. The doctor was gone; but a young student came. The fever still raging; but he made out large doses of quinine, ordered a dose given every two hours, and rode away filled with professional pride. After the first dose was taken, Sister Lucy never closed her eyes in sleep until she closed them in the sleep of death. Kind friends prepared her for her burial; for all loved Sister Lucy. The Father said: "Freck, mount your horse and ride away and tell the neighbors that Sister Lucy will be buried to-morrow." Notwithstanding the extreme cold, many came from Miller's Creek, Gray's Creek, and Oak Grove to Sister Lucy's funeral.

Joe, with his brain dulled and dazed by the blow, returned to his desolate home—doubly desolate to Joe; for, having taken no active part in the affairs of the household, he was as helpless as a child. Little Lucy took up the burden where her mother laid it down—or as much thereof as a nine-year-old child could carry. Little Lucy was Sister Lucy in a less degree; the same big, dreamy, blue eyes, the same low, soft voice, and the same willingness to carry the burdens. Ten years of coddling had unfitted Joe for battling with the hard and perplexing conditions of life. ("Lest I forget," I will say right here that Joe never scolded, never found fault, never nagged. I am persuaded that Joe never spoke a cross word in his home the ten years. Now, doesn't that cover a multitude of sins, and make you like Joe a little bit?) Little Lucy mothered the babies, prepared the meals, and washed and mended the garments.

Joe fetched some of the water from the spring and split the kindling, but he did not build the fire in the morning. But the baby and little Joe could not rough it through the cold, stormy winter, and a couple of little mounds were rounded up by the side of Sister Lucy.

Sister Lucy's dark and silent home was under the great spreading basswood tree, in the edge of the grove, where she loved to sit of a Sunday evening and listen to the bird-songs and the humming of the bees, and dreamily watch the sun sinking to rest far out on the wide prairie, and the stars as they one by one opened their eyes and looked down upon the earth and its toiling, sorrowing millions. And Sister Lucy, in a soft and pleading voice, would whisper to her heart: "Yes, we have found the romantic, picturesque home in the wildwood." But her heart would not believe it, and her spiritualized soul would stretch out her arms to grasp something, she knew not what; but her arms were too short, and Sister Lucy would go away conscious of an incomplete and crippled life. And only when this mortal shall have put on immortality, and she shall awake in His likeness, shall Sister Lucy be satisfied. Two of them in the churchyard lay, away back in the old eastern home, where Sister Lucy as a child spent many hours strolling among the thickly set tombstones, reading the inscriptions, many of which were more than a hundred years old. And two of them lay by her side on the western frontier, where only bits of boards mark the last resting-place of the dead. And two of them, Little Lucy and Albert, in their simple and innocent childhood, were alternately crying and laughing, and struggling against the hard conditions of life in their cabin home on the western frontier.

Thus Joe and Little Lucy and Albert, with tears and with smiles, in loneliness and struggling, got on for two years. But He who takes notice of the falling sparrow only knew how they got on. And then Joe married; but he didn't marry a Sister Lucy—he married Matilda. And Joe's "to-morrow" had found the way in. The roof and the walls were mended, and Joe split the kindling and built the fire in the morning, and at Matilda's mocking smile Joe's "rheumatiz" took to the woods. Some said: "Joe has outgrown his careless habits. Poor Sister Lucy!" And others said: "Joe has been cured of his danged laziness. Poor Sister Lucy!"

CHAPTER XII.

Month by month, a day at a time, the cold and stormy Winter of 1854 passed over the range. Each day in passing handed out a portion of pleasure and gladness, hopes realized, and purpose attained; also a portion of disappointment, sorrow, and heaviness of heart. But, regardless of the conditions of the children of men, the Spring of 1855 blessed the earth with her smiles and her tears. And all nature joined in a song of rejoicing. The woods were fairly bursting with the song of the birds; the squirrels, with joyful tails curled over their backs, scampered along the top rail of the fence; the cheerful whistle and song of the plowboy as he drove his team afield floated away on the morning air; the farmer's wife and daughter, with rake and hoe, were busy in the yard; and little columns of blue smoke wriggled up into the sleepy air, marking the location of each cabin along the edge of the zigzagging woods. Water is turned into the ash-hopper, and the lye is poured into the big soap-kettle, hanging on the same old pole between the same old charred logs, and the same child, with the same old gourd, stands guard with cold lye. And the bubbling of the soap, the songs of the big girls and their mothers, the bleating of the sheep, the shout of the happy children, the lowing of the cattle, and the neighing of the horses mingled in one mighty song of new life and gladness all along the western frontier.

The days of our youth, could we but keep them with us for ever! But they speed away like a bird on the wing. To-day we are walking carelessly and contentedly along the path of boyhood and girlhood, in blissful ignorance of to-morrow and free from anxious care; and to-morrow, for the first time, there is born to us the all-pervading passion, the passion that has filled the world with happiness, with misery, and with crime. This new knowledge has lifted our feet from the old path forever. Never again can we go back and walk therein. The new path is carpeted with moss and bordered with flowers, and our feet touch the ground but lightly; and the inscription over the gateway is "Love." The aromatic, sweet myrrh of the first bite bitten from the apple of love, who can forget it? We may bite off other bites that will prove more satisfying, or we may sip the bitterness of nux vomica; but the aromatic, sweet myrrh, have you forgotten?

The adjoining farm was a widow's farm, and the widow had a daughter, Edith (her name wasn't Edith at at all) and one lovely spring morning, while the soap was a-bubbling and the mighty song of gladness was being sung all along the frontier, Freck harnessed his little blue roan mare to the buggy, and Margaret, Edith, and Freck drove to Eddyville, twelve miles, and but one house on the way. They crossed the Des Moines River on a rope ferry. There they, for the first time, had their pictures taken; they were taken on glass plates.

Returning home the little roan was permitted to choose her own gait; for there seemed to be no need to hurry, as the world was filled with pleasant things, the sun shone with a softer light, the bird songs were sweeter, her eyes were more lovely, and the blue sky was swung closer to the ground. The white clouds floated slowly along overhead and whispered, and two of the young hearts in the single seat heard the white clouds whispering, and love looked love

Taken 1856.

FRECK AT 20.

EDITH AND MARGARET.

1920.

64 years ago.
Freck.

to eyes, and their hearts were just plumb-full of gladness; for this day, for the first time, there was born unto them the all-pervading passion. And you can, for the first time, lay aside the perplexing cares of the present time and go back into the long, long ago and look into the faces of these children of the frontier.

Edith and Margaret were dear girl friends; the cabins were real close, with a nice path through the grove, and the riders were taken off the panel where the path crossed the line fence. Edith would come over of an evening to tell Margaret, and Margaret would go as far as the line fence, and so would Freck; and Margaret would go over to tell Edith, and so would Freck, and Edith would come as far as the line fence; and when Edith's sun-bonnet would slip back on her shoulders, Freck would replace it and tie the strings under her chin, and look down into her eyes; for Edith was little and had lovely blue eyes. She was a year younger than Freck, and could talk almost all the time. And these two children of the backwoods, living their clean and simple lives, were happy; but, in the words of the old song, "Their lips had never met, never met."

Pete, a big, stoop-shouldered, thirty-five-year-old Hoosier from off the Wabash, who spoke in a hollow voice and never smiled nor said anything funny, with a span of horses, pulled into the settlement. Pete rented the widow's farm, and the widow housed Pete and fed Pete, and received one-half the crop. The widow's cabin was filled to the uttermost, and the poor woman's heart was full of anxious thoughts for the morrow: "How shall I clothe them all, and wherewithal shall they be fed?" Pete, in his hollow voice, in season and out of season, kept on repeating: "Little birds, as soon as fledged, should build nests and relieve the mother bird." And the widow, in the discouraged voice of a little faded-out woman, who was fighting the battle alone to keep the wolf from the door, would reply: "Yes; if the little bird loved the mother, she would fly away and gather twigs and moss." Edith's heart was filled with sorrow for the lone and over-burdened little faded-out mother. But Edith didn't have so many things to tell Margaret, and the grass began to grow in the path. And Freck wasn't so happy any more. Was Edith?

At the close of the day, Freck was drawing water for his horses with the windlass bucket, and Margaret, filled with some new gladness, came out, and as Freck was lifting the bucket she put her arms around his neck and whispered: "Freck, you can't guess where I'm going to-morrow." But Margaret couldn't wait for a guess, and she exclaimed: "I'm going to a wedding!"

"To a wedding!" echoed Freck. "Who is going to be married?"

"Oh! Edith and Pete. Edith was over this evening and gave Jim and me an invite."

Freck was lowering the bucket with his hand on the windlass, and his voice quavered as he asked: "Did Edith not give me an invite too?"

"No; just Jim and me." And, spinning 'round on her toes, Margaret ran back into the house.

And Freck cared for his team as on other evenings; for we perform the tasks of life whether the heart is bounding with gladness or crushed with sorrow. But long time Freck sat on the barnyard fence, with a dull, sluggish feeling like he had received a lick with a sandbag; and, like a wounded deer, cared only to keep out of sight and die alone. On the morrow the widow will stand smiling and see Edith unequally yoked for life with the big Hoosier Pete; and on the morrow Edith and Pete will turn their faces toward the setting sun and start off along the journey of life. As they go on and on, passing over the hills and through the bramble thickets, the miry places, and the rocky places, where their feet will be bruised, Edith will be a half-length ahead, pulling and chafing, but never balky; and Pete will shamble along, his singletree everlastingly rubbing and rasping against the wheel, and will never smile nor say anything funny. The years will go rolling on, rolling on, and so will the everlasting rasping on the wheel; and they will draw nearer and nearer to the end of the trail, where they will lay aside the yoke, and the everlasting rasping will be forever stilled, and their names will be graven on the doorplate of their abode in the marble city of the dead.

That night, for the first time, Freck's bed was spread on thorns, and with wakeful tossings he longed for the morning, and begged Death to come and end it all; but Death stood off and made faces at him. But Will, by his side, slept the sweet sleep of boyhood. How Freck did long to go back and walk in the old path, and forever forget the new and its mocking inscription over the gateway? But there was a deep chasm across the path, and the foot-bridge was gone, and there was no turning back; and in black letters was written, "Ye shall be wise; knowing good and evil." What a harvest of heart-anguish and despair do the young reap from the field of disappointed love? And on the morrow Freck, with the dull, sand-bagged feeling, drove his team afield. And the noon hour was very quiet.

The Mother never called the boy "Freck." She had three names for him: when she wished to impress him with her motherly authority, she would say, "Now, Robert"; and in daily intercourse she would say, "Now, Rob"; but when the Mother's heart was tender and sympathetic toward her second-born, she would say, "Now, Robbie"; and this was her manner long after he was bald-headed and gray.

So when Freck pushed back from the table, the Mother cleared her throat and said: "Now, Robbie, what is the matter with you to-day?"

"Why, there is nothing the matter with me—not a thing!"

But the Mother gave her head a little shake and said: "Now, Robbie, you are not quite yourself to-day. Hadn't you better tell the Mother?"

This kindness was too much for Freck; as usual, the tear-fountain bubbled over at the low places, and he bit off and spit out the words: "I think she might have given me an invite too."

"Now, Robbie, maybe she thought it kinder to you, and to herself, not to give you an invitation. Any way, if I were you, I wouldn't give a fig. Some day you will have a wedding of your own. And you needn't send her an invitation." And there was a smile in the Mother's eyes and at the corners of her mouth.

Did the Mother's heart know what was the matter with the boy? and also know that he would get well, but wished to take away a part of the bitter taste? and was the smile born of the reminiscent sweet myrrh? A great writer has written, "We never marry our first love." And a wiser writer has written, "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

All day long Freck followed the plow, and a sub-conscious Freck walked between the plow-handles and kept on saying: "Well, Freck, it's all over with you. Boys never take it the second time. You are immune." And Freck would bitterly say: "Had it been any other than that dod-darned big Hoosier, who never smiles nor says anything funny! But if she loved as I have loved, she never can forget."

CHAPTER XIII.

Hearts were full of gladness, and hearts were filled with sadness; there were dark, angry frowns, and gentle eyes looked love to eyes; there were kind and loving words, and there was bitter and cruel chiding; eyes scintillated with happiness, and eyes were dimmed from weeping scalding tears; weary mothers at the hour of midnight, with sick babies in their arms, walked the floor, and the husbands slumbered and snored; there was singing and praying, and there was sulks and swearing; there was going to meeting on the Sabbath, and there was going fishing on the Sabbath; there was selling and buying, and there was fair dealing and unfair dealing; the cows were milked in the rain and the boys galloped the plowhorses to the creek to water, and oxen were beaten and the horses were slammed; the fields were plowed, and the fields were planted; some husbands nagged and scolded and found fault, and some wives took it meekly—and some didn't; the sun shone down, and the rain poured down, on the good and the bad alike. And the hand of Time kept right on turning the crank, and hour by hour the bright sunshiny days and the dark rainy days of the spring of 1855 were wound up beyond the reach of all save memory.

This spring our Seceder minister attended a church convocation and for two Sabbaths we had no meetings. On one of these Sabbath mornings Freck was strolling in the grove, listening to the bird-songs and to the wind whispering to the trees. In a bend of the woods to the north old Father Davis (he was called "the Patriarch") and his sons and his sons-in-law and others of like faith (for they were all United Brethren) had settled and built their cabins close together, and we called it "Davistown"; they held their meetings in the log school-house. A belt of timber and a branch divided Davistown from our settlement, and we children called the branch "Jabbok," because it divided the Brethren from the Seceders. And without purpose Freck started along the path through the woods, and crossed over Jabbok, and went on and on, listening to the bird-songs and the voices of the woods, and dreaming a sweet melancholy day-dream. The perfumed Sabbath morning breeze kissed his cheek and softly whispered to his heart, and the trees bowed their heads and smiled and said, "Good morning, Freck." The birds were all singing their Sabbath morning hymns, the bees were droning away down in the buttercups, and the squirrels were calling from tree to tree, "Hello! Here comes Freck." And Freck came out of the woods, and out of his day-dream, right at the Davistown school-house.

He was given a friendly greeting, and the oldish men and women shook his hand and said, "Good morning, Brother Freck; I'm glad to see you here"; for everybody knew Freck, as he had broken prairie and bought steers and helped in harvest. Now this was so different from our Seceder meeting that it covered Freck with confusion and embarrassment; for, mind you, Freck had not been to meeting (save Seceder meeting) since the night he galloped away with Sam and Jim and left Sarah Jane Mack to walk home alone. There was only class-meeting to-day, but Freck knew not what class-meeting should mean. Someone commenced to sing and all went into the school-house, and Freck was carrried along and sat down on the back bench, next the window-hole. Mr. Mack was called "Brother Mack," and so we will call him. Brother Mack was Father Davis' ("the Patriarch's") son-in-law, and a large, broad-shouldered man, with streaks of gray in his long whiskers. I will tell you farther on how Freck learned that he was "class leader." Brother Mack arose and said, "We will have a season of song," and all rose to their feet, and so did Freck, not knowing what else to do. And they sang:

"Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?"

And the rolling repeat at the end of each verse:

"Or blush to speak His name?
Or blush to speak His name?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?"

They sang from memory; not a hymn-book in the house. And such earnestness, such abandon! The very clapboards seemed to rise and fall with the song. And song after song was sung. It was all very new and strange to Freck, and his emotional nature was soon brought under the influence.

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

And when they began singing,

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty strains."

Brother Mack started around shaking hands with everyone, big and little, and singing the rolling repeat:

"Lose all their guilty strains,
Lose all their guilty strains,"

And when Brother Mack, with the tears running down his cheeks and singing,

"Lose all their guilty strains,
Lose all their guilty strains,"

reached Freck, he grasped his cold, clammy hand, exclaiming, "God bless you, Brother Freck!" and kept right on singing:

"Lose all their guilty strains,
Lose all their guilty strains;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty strains."

Freck was putting up a desperate fight and watching the low places, for the fountain was filling up, and he didn't dare to look into the tear-wet faces, lest his own tears would overflow the banks all along; but he kept his gaze fixed on the white clouds floating past the window-hole, and on a bunch of hawks sailing around and around, away up in the glorious sunshine, and wishing himself on the other side of Jabbok. And when they began to sing:

"How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see!
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers
Have all lost their sweetness with me,"

the great red sun, the stumpy trail, the little cabin, the corn shocked around the deadened trees, and the woman and her song, all passed before him in the twinkling of an eye.

Then there was a season of talking; they called it "experience-meeting." Old Father Davis was a sturdy old man, with a white bushy head, and he had left eighty milestones behind his back; when he arose, there was a hush. "Children," said the old man, "I'm glad to meet with you this morning. I'm drawing near the end of the journey. I started in this Christian life before any of you were born, and I'm glad the Lord called me in my youth. Yesterday I went to the timber for a load of rails, and I gave the oxen their corn and began to load the rails. [The old man's glowing face and the strangeness of his talk held Freck in a spell.] And the Spirit came over me, and I knelt down right there; and, children, I had a little camp-meeting there by myself, me and my Saviour." There were tears and sobbing all around, and Freck didn't watch the low places any more, but let them flow over all along.

And this was the class of men and women, sun-tanned and weather-beaten and clad in homespun, who built their cabins along the timber belts, and worshiped God in log school-houses, and laid the foundations for the grandest State in the Union—Iowa.

The Father was reading in the shade of the trees, and hearing the gate click, he looked up, and pushing up his glasses, he asked, "Freck, where have you been all the forenoon?" "I have been over to Davistown to meeting." "Over to Davistown to meeting!" echoed the Father. "Freck, if you must go to hear these people, go on a week day; don't break the Sabbath by going." Dear old honest, upright, God-fearing, conscientious Father! true to his early religious training and his convictions of the right. A few years later, while living on the very edge of the border, he threw his cabin door wide open to the wandering preachers, who were following close behind the covered wagons, looking after and feeding the wandering sheep, and persuading many of the goats to enter the sheepfold.

CHAPTER XIV.

Over across Gray's Creek was the Williams Settlement. In the early days it was the custom for relations or people of the same religious faith to settle together; and old Father Williams came from Kentucky, fetching along his sons and his daughters, their Kentucky wives and husbands, and their Kentucky horses, cows, dogs, and habits.

They did not have a log school-house, nor go to meeting on Sunday; but in the fall, of a Sunday morning, a half-dozen wagons, drawn by a half-dozen yoke of oxen, followed by a dozen dogs, and filled with a jolly lot of Kentucky mothers and children, could be seen coming from different directions toward the old man's double cabin, with the two porches, in the grove. And there was no corn bread like unto the corn bread prepared by these Kentucky housewives; nor ham, nor bacon with the same spicy flavor. And in the fall each one rolled a barrel of old Kentucky whiskey into the smoke-house, and at meals the bottle and the jigger (a little tin cup) stood at the head of the table, and each helped himself to a portion—and the mother would sweeten it for the baby; but I never knew one of these people to be under the influence of whiskey.

They all kept a gang of dogs; for each child must have a dog he could call his own. Lev was an exception; Lev kept but two. One was a little, slim, "sassy," black cur. Lev called him "Feist," and Feist took upon himself all the watchful care of the farm. The other one was a great, strong-jawed, savage bloodhound, the kind used for hunting down runaway slaves. Lev called him "Old Chawemup." Old Chawemup had dug a hole under a pile of clapboards, and would crawl in to get away from the gnats; but when Feist would turn in the alarm, Old Chawemup would rush around to the front, with his bristles raised and his tail in a threatening attitude; and woe to the stranger within the gate. At times the oxen would cross the creek, and Freck would have to pass Lev's house; and when he would hear Feist's sharp call, followed by Old Chawemup's blood-curdling bay, his heart would refuse to go forward, but his feet would go off like a frightened deer. Freck often met Lev looking for his oxen, and they became good friends, and Freck learned all about the dogs, and that Old Chawemup, while quite a young dog, had overtaken and "chawed up" a runaway "nigger," and for ever after he was known as "Old Chawemup."

Our cabin was built in the edge of the woods, and the yard was fenced with rails; the split picket gate was hinged to the side of a tree with wooden hinges. By the side of the log corn-crib, under the shady oaks, Elizabeth and Belle (the wee curly-headed baby girl that the Mother carried in her arms from the deck of the *Red Wing*) had built a play-house, and we boys had covered it with clapboards, fixed up shelves, and made little cradles for their rag dolls; for a store doll had never been seen this far west. At the noon hour the boys would visit and have a real nice time; for children in those days made their happiness as they went along and out of mighty simple things.

One morning a big rattlesnake crawled out and sunk its fangs into Belle's ankle, and then glided back under the crib. All the crude old-time remedies were used, but by ten o'clock the child was nearing the entrance into the dark valley. The Father said: "Freck, mount a horse and gallop to Lev Williams' and fetch some whiskey." Freck turned into the path and gave his horse the rein, and he rode down to the ford and then up to Lev's house; but when he drew near, he was filled with consternation, for the door was shut, and he knew that they were away from home. He gave the gate a rattle, and listened for Feist's sharp bark, followed by Old Chawemup's deep roar; but all was still. Freck walked to the door, leaving the gate ajar, and knocked, still listening and ready to flee and close the gate; but all was still. Then Freck turned into the path to the smoke-house, still listening; but the beating of his heart was the only sound. Then he opened the door, and there was a red-headed barrel, and in black letters was, "Old Kentucky Whiskey." And whiskey, the destroyer, saved the child's life.

The breaking season again rolled around, and Freck and Will strung out the oxen to the great plow and started out to pay for the steers and cows bought during the winter. These wild steers had been trained during the winter; yoked and unyoked many times a day, and worked in the timber. Every Saturday evening the boys came home to attend meeting on the Sabbath, and this often entailed a loss of half a day coming and the same returning, and twenty miles' travel for the oxen; but without this willing sacrifice to duty the Father could not ask God's blessing on the labor of his hands.

At the time of harvest the Father said: "Boys, drive your plows out of the way and unyoke your oxen; we will break no more prairie this season." We know not what a day may bring forth, and the Father did not know that the next furrow of prairie sod he would turn over would be on a homestead away out on the bleak prairie of northeast Nebraska Territory, and that twenty years would intervene; nor that a long and bloody war would have been fought, and that Will, the true-hearted son and brother, would be sleeping in a soldier's grave, far from home and friends, and that Jim would have returned from the war a cripple for life; nor that he and the Mother, in their seventieth year, with undaunted wills, would be battling with the storms and the adverse and hard conditions of life on a prairie homestead on the western frontier.

The Father and Big Jack bought a threshing machine. This machine did not separate the grain from the straw and chaff; this was done with a fanning-mill, which was turned by hand. There were no separator machines in those days. This season the Father said: "Freck, you will have to go out with the threshing machine." And Freck and Big Jack pulled for Clark's Point, and began threshing out of the shock, before the grain was stacked. They kept on to Pleasant Divide, and Big Avery and Sunrise Prairie, and away down to Milledgeville, in Appanoose County, and then back home. After leaving straw-ricks where stood the grain-stacks, they pulled around to Davistown; and after eating fried chicken and sweet potatoes with the Brethren, they pulled across Gray's Creek to Williams' Grove, and ate corn bread and roast pig with the Kentuckians; here Big Jack sold to Jim Busby, one of the Kentuckians, and Jim Busby and Freck pulled over onto Bluff Creek; then Freck sold his wagon and machine, and riding one horse and leading the other, he returned home.

CHAPTER XV.

The human heart is past finding out. Big Jack was six feet one in height, with coarse black hair and big front teeth, and he wasn't very pretty; but he was good-natured, and belonged to the Seceder Church (and all of his folks), and he was thirty-five years old, and was accounted an exemplary young man. But when Big Jack and Freck were away from home, Big Jack would swear like anybody; and when they were alone, he would plead: "Freck, when we go home, don't breathe a word about my swearing; for it would break my mother's heart, and my girl would sure go back on me, for she is awful pious." Big Jack was pleasant and jolly, and Freck, in his boyish way, liked Big Jack; so of his lips he kept the door.

Big Jack's girl, Mildred (and Mildred wasn't her name at all), and Jane (and Jane was her name) were twin sisters. They were left orphans when young, and Mildred's aunt gave her a home, and a cousin gave Jane a home; but when Mildred was sixteen, her aunt found rest in the grave, and the cousin put her arms around Mildred and took her to her cabin home. And Mildred's kinswomen met and resolved that: "Whereas Cousin has given Jane a home, for lo these many years; and whereas Cousin's cabin is being crowded by the arrival at intervals of a (to Cousin) sweet little new-comer; therefore it is our duty to open our doors and give Mildred food and shelter." And there were other mothers, who were not of Mildred's lineage, but who pitied the poor girl, and needed her work, and they also opened their doors. And as Mildred drew near her sensitive soul read the inscription: "Thou art a dependent." And her sensitive soul crept a little closer to herself. Three years had passed behind the veil into the temple where time shall be measured no more when Mildred entered the Mother's open door; for the Mother needed her work.

Mildred was a good and tender-hearted girl, with a sensitive nature, scared, pleading eyes, and willing hands. Mildred endeavored to fill the lonely and melancholy void in her heart and life with religion, and she was devotedly pious. Religion gives us peace with God, and assures us an entrance into His kingdom in the world to come; but religion can not come in and fill this earth-life to completeness.

MILDRED.

Adam was sinless, Adam walked in the Paradise of God, Adam had daily communion with his Creator, but Adam's life was incomplete; and Adam knew not what was missing from his life, but God knew. And God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helpmeet." And Adam slept. And God removed a rib, and of the rib He builded a woman. (Builded" is the Hebrew rendering.) And God builded on till He brought forth the masterpiece of His workmanship, a lovely woman. And Adam awoke, and his heart cried: "Oh! Here is the missing part. She is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one; two imperfect lives blended into one perfect life. This was the purpose of God; this was the end in view when God builded the woman. But the Devil, and wicked men and women, have thwarted the purpose of God.

And every good man—I am not speaking of a bad man. A bad man's heart is bad; his thoughts and his inflamed passions are bad; and the purpose of his heart is to gratify his sensual and devilish lusts, and drag others down to his own level. But a good man—and I care not how good he may be; he may be wholly sanctified, he may enjoy the fullest measure of religion; but his life is incomplete, there is a void in his heart. And when he meets the right woman, his heart shouts the same glad shout that Adam shouted.

And every good woman—now, I am not talking about a bad woman. No, I will say but little about a bad woman. A bad woman's heart is a cesspool of lewd and sensual desires and sinful intentions; and her trail can be followed by the slime left in her footprints, and in her wake are wrecked homes, wailing children, and deserted, heart-broken wives. A bad woman is the crowning curse the Devil has inflicted on a sorrowing world. A bad woman is a stench in the nostrils of the Almighty. But we love to speak of a good woman, the crowning gift of God. And every good woman feels lost on the desert of life until she is pressed back into the place from whence she was taken—close to a good man's heart.

Sam (and his name wasn't Sam) was a good boy, and the void in his heart had never been filled. In the evening Sam would start in to tell Mildred the old, old story, but Sam couldn't tell it very well, for Sam had never been to college; Sam had only sat a few months on the backless benches in a log school-house. But, Mrs. Reader, Mildred in the log cabin knew what Sam wanted to say just as well as you knew what Dick said in your papa's white house on the hill.

And Big Jack wanted to tell Mildred the old, old story; for Big Jack was thirty-five, and not very pretty, and still had the void in his heart. And Big Jack prayed Mildred to leave the Mother's house; for Big Jack and Sam didn't like each other very well. But Mildred liked to stay at the Mother's house; for Sam kept right on trying to tell her the old, old story. But Mildred's kin and Big Jack's kin belonged to the same clan, and Big Jack solicited aid, and they sent and fetched Mildred home. Some coaxed and persuaded, some domineered and hectored, and Big Jack pleaded; and Mildred married Big Jack. Sam packed his carpet-sack with disappointed love, and started off down the trail alone. Big Jack honestly and ardently endeavored to make Mildred cheerful and happy, and when the fruit of his efforts was only a soft, absent look, he was heavy of heart. And all the time, night XX and day, Big Jack felt it in his heart, and kept turning it over and over in his mind (but he was too much of a man to say it to Mildred): "It is all because of that damned Sam." In one short year they carried Mildred into the little meeting-house, and the minister spoke words of consolation; the laid her to rest in the little graveyard back of the meeting-house, where she will sleep until the morning of the first resurrection.

Sam kept on down the trail alone for ten years, and the last three years he wore the blue and carried a musket; sixteen times he stood on the firing-line, with his face to the foe, and then he fell on the battle-field. And Nathan Stone and many others fell on the battle-field. Nathan and Sam, and many other ten thousands of boys, laid aside the homespun garments and put on the blue, and let go the plow-handles; and bidding mother and home good-bye, they marched away at their country's call. Sam and Nathan, side by side, had kept step on the weary march and stood shoulder to shoulder on the firing-line, and now they lay on the battle-field with arms touching. Their comrades were driven back, and left them; and those wearing the gray came pell-mell, stumbling and leaping over the dead and the wounded; and soon they returned, with the Blues in hot pursuit; and again the Blues faced the other way, with the Grays in hot pursuit. And they all leaped and stumbled over the dead and the wounded. And the noise of the battle grew fainter and fainter, and died away in the dark woods. Then others wearing the gray came up, in less haste, and holes were digged; and Nathan and others, wearing both the blue and the gray, were buried.

And Sam and others, wearing both the blue and the gray, were carried away in wagons. And Sam and others

XX Big Jack, and his Brothers; Matthew and
Tom; were killed in the charge on Vicksburg

shared the hospitality and the corn bread and the bean broth of the Grays for nine months; and not a word came to the friends at home. Then as many as were yet alive were lined up and marched before a tattered coat of gray, and Captain Gray said unto them: "Say, you Yanks, I don't want you-all to think that you-all have outstayed yo'r welcome; but the fact is, corn bread an' bean broth is gittin' mighty sca'ce in these woods, an' we're gwine to turn you-all loose. But fust you-all what kin write sign this per-ole paper, an' you-all what hain't write make yo'r mark." Now, those garments of blue were made by contract, and from old carded-over saddle-blankets and things, and were in no way related to the Israelitish garments (Deuteronomy xxix. 5), and these maimed and ragged "Yanks" sure were a sorry-looking lot. But each signed his name; some with the flourish of a writing-master. And the ragged coat of gray was astonished; and looking at the ragamuffin line, he inquired: "Say, Yanks, how you-all larn to write?" "Huh!" sneered the boy with the stub arm; "boys up north don't have to learn to write. Our mothers are all teachers, and we are born that way." And the tattered coat of gray quietly replied: "Wall, from the look of you-all, I guess you are tellin' the truth. An' now you can pull out for Noo Or-lins. You sure will find lots of Yanks at Noo Or-lins." "But," inquired the boy with the scar across his face, "how are we to reach New Orleans without a cent in money?" "Oh! you-all will have to depend on Prov'dence and the niggers." And I had it straight from Sam that neither "Prov'dence" nor the "niggers" went back on them. But day after day they tramped and hobbled over the clay hills, and at last, from a high hill, they saw a flag floating on the breeze; and with shaded eyes they gazed, and in one voice they cried, "It's Old Glory!" and the tattered caps flew into the air. But there was a lump in the throat; for it was, as Sam put it, "like coming face to face with Mother."

And when the ten years were fulfilled, Sam halted by the wayside. And they thrust the sickle into the standing grain, and side by side they reaped the harvest of life. And they gathered the wheat and they gathered the tares into the storehouse of the heart for thirty-five years; and then, looking up to Heaven, she cried, "It is enough!" and she laid down her sickle. And her name and her age are graven on the doorplate of her abode in the city of the dead. And Sam is still going on down the trail, and alone; and ere long he will stumble over the precipice of Time and go down into the dark abyss, and the waters of forgetfulness will close over him and the battles he has fought and the fields that he has reaped.

You and I are walking in his footsteps, and others are treading on our heels. See you not the multitude coming over yonder hills? See them pouring out of the ravines; some with the firm step of manhood, some with the faltering step of age, and others with the light step of youth. But all are hastening and crowding and jostling down into the valley of the shadow. And like a mighty river at floodtide they are rolling on and pouring over into the deep dark chasm; and the chasm is never filled, and the flood is ever rolling on and pouring over, rolling on and pouring over.

"Life is but a rolling river,
Flowing on from day to day;
Men are vessels launched upon it,
Sometimes lost and cast away."

We are nearing the vortex; let us be ready for the plunge. Let us put on the life-preserver and lay hold of the life-line; for it spans the dark river of Death and reaches within the veil, and is made fast to the throne of God.

CHAPTER XVI.

After returning from the threshing, Freck was called upon many times to trade a horse for a yoke of oxen, or a yoke of oxen for a horse; for the old pioneers loved to dicker. The Father had given him the full length of the rope, with this admonition: "Freck, always keep the truth on your side, and pay but little heed to what the other man says." Freck's boyish heart began to feel the twitchings of coming manhood, and he would show off his stock to the best of his ability. Oh, those days of our young manhood! How full of simple pleasure they seem to have been! The humble log-cabin home, the log barn, the yoking-pen, the shade-trees, and the lowing of the cattle—these things are all passing before me to-night, and I am hearing familiar voices and looking into loved faces; and I see the pins in the wall, the ladder by which we climbed to our cottage bed, that stood in the middle of the roof.

THE HOME OF FRECK'S YOUNG MANHOOD
ON THE FRONTIER, 1858.

And here is a song that Edith and Margaret and Freck, while sitting in the moonlight, used to sing in the happy days gone by. This song was written by Coates Kinney, and it is evident that Coates Kinney had loved and lost.

"When the humid shadows hover over all the starry spheres,
And the melancholy darkness gently weeps in rainy tears,
What a joy to press the pillows of a cottage chamber bed,
And to listen to the patter of the soft rain overhead!

"Every tinkle on the clapboard has an echo in the heart;
And a thousand dreamy fancies into busy being start.
And a thousand recollections weave their bright hues into
woof,
As I listen to the patter of the rain upon the roof.

"Now in fancy comes my mother as she used to years agone,
To survey her darling dreamers ere she left them till the dawn;
Oh! I see her bending o'er me as I list to this refrain
Which is played upon the clapboards by the patter of the rain.

"Then my little seraph sister with her wings and waving hair,
And her bright-eyed cherub brother—a serene, angelic pair—
Glide around my wakeful pillow with their praise or mild reproof,
As I listen to the murmur of the soft rain on the roof.

"And another comes to thrill me with her eyes' delicious blue;
And forget I, gazing on her, that her heart was all untrue;
I remember but to love her with a rapture kin to pain,
And my heart's quick pulses vibrate to the patter of the rain."

And while I am in a poetic, reminiscent mood, I will transcribe, from an old yellow sheet bearing the ear-marks of Freck, a song that never has been sung nor ever will be sung:

October Days.

Them smoky, dreamy days air cum,
The sun's shimmering down through the haze;
I'm dreamin' of the long ago,
My happy boyhood days.

Them gladsome soulful days I loved,
When the sky swung clost to the ground;
Great chunks of gladness a-joltin' the breast,
As the heart flung 'em off with a bound.

The frosty nights wur clear and crisp,
Red leaves wur droppin' off;
In early morn a scum of ice
On the old log waterin'-troff.

I liked to git out an' do the chores
  Afore the break of day,
An' watch the sky git red and redder,
  As the darkness sneaked away.

On the old dead tree in the edge of the woods,
  His bare arms stretched to the sky,
To warm theirselves in the comin' sun,
  The crows set a-cawin up high.

On fences an' trees the blackbirds light,
  A chatterin', jolly old throng;
It made my heart go pit-a-pat
  To hear their morning song.

Oh, them hazy, solemncolly days,
  Chuck-full of hopeful cheer!
I loved to meander off alone,
  Crost medders brown an' sere.

I liked to hear that rattlin' noise
  In the corn-field as I past,
And hear the lonely katydid
  Amongst the tickle-grass.

I loved to hear that "Bob, Bob White!"
  As I lounged anunder the trees,
And watched the babblin' brook go by,
  With its fleet of autumn leaves.

I loved to set on the pastur fence,
  Dark shadders in nooks crawlin' 'round,
An' listen to the whipperwill
  An' the cow-bell's distant sound.

And in a sort of wakish dream,
  Hear brown-eyed Tildy Voss
A-swingin' on the gate an' callin',
  "Co Boss! Co Boss! Co Boss!"

I loved to come a-santerin' home,
  When the sun to the stars sent his greetin';
My heart all meller an' solem' like
  I'd spent all day in meetin'.

I liked to loiter around outside,
  While the wind in the trees sobbed a sigh;
Hear Mother in the kitchen a-singin',
  "I 'll rest from my labor by and by."

An' when the voices all wur hushed,
  I 'd climb to my attic steep,
An' close my eyes and softly say,
  "Lord, now I lay me down to sleep."

CHAPTER XVII.

Yes, I remember, I did promise to tell you how Freck learned that Brother Mack was "class leader." Freck met Brother Lott, as he did Lev Williams, when seeking his Father's oxen. Just beyond Jabbok, a mile west of Davistown, with a strip of woods between, lived Brother Lott. Brother Lott was a big six-footer, and he was the first man Freck ever saw wearing a long, stiff, fierce, aggressive moustache and the face clean shaven. Brother Lott was not related to the Davisites by marriage or otherwise, but he and Sister Lott were members of the class and lived in fellowship—until. Brother Lott, like most all the settlers, managed to have feed to carry his stock through to grass and no more, and Brother Lott was one of the few who worked horses instead of oxen. Brother Lott owned a large roan four-year-old, and the law said, "Roan shall not be permitted to run at large." But Brother Lott had no feed, and his horses fed down on the creek, and Roan was turned on the range with the others; and one night Roan sneaked past home and up through the woods to Davistown. Now, I am telling the story as Brother Lott told it to me, but in my own way and in my own words, and the inductions are wholly my own; nevertheless, the inductions, cannot be gainsaid nor set aside. When Roan came to Brother Mack's gate, he proceeded to make kindling-wood of it, and in a general way he raised the very dickens. Brother Mack left his bed to investigate, and then he called the boys, and Roan was gotten into the barn and the door was shut. After morning prayers, Brother Mack heard a voice saying, "Brother Mack, send Brother Lott word about Roan." But the Devil spoke up real quick and middling loud:

"Brother Lott had no right to turn Roan out. You are within the law." Brother Mack proceeded to the field, but the voice kept right on saying: "Brother Mack, send Brother Lott word about Roan." Brother Mack had to fight the Devil all day, but the Devil won out. For every evil thought, every sinful intention and desire, and every impulse to do a base or degrading act is the voice of the Devil. And every aspiration after a higher and purer life is the voice of God, and every good deed that anyone does, saint or sinner, is done in obedience to the voice of God.

Early in the morning, while the day was breaking, Lott wended his way along the path to fetch his horses; and Roan was not. Lott hastened home, and waiting not for Sister Lott nor the children, nor to say grace, he gulped a bite of breakfast, mounted a horse, and rode away in search of Roan; and in his haste he did not notice that the Devil slipped astride behind the saddle. After riding through the Williams Settlement and the Bluff Creek Settlement, he returned home, weary, disappointed, hungry, and cross; and, like all men when vexed, he had to be snappish with his wife, and, like some men, he inwardly despised himself for it. But it does seem that we can't help it; it's man's nature, when vexed at anything, to be snappish with his wife; and, bless their dear hearts! some wives have caught the contagion. Lott changed horses, and without saying, "Wife, I'm vexed about Roan; don't mind my meanness," he rode away toward Davistown. And when opposite Brother Mack's barn, Roan called him; and he opened the door, and there stood Roan. Twelve hours before Lott would have despised the strong man who would have allowed his angry passions to gain the mastery over his Christian manhood; but the Devil had an end in view, and had prepared the way for the meeting.

Brother Mack came slowly and timidly toward the barn; for Brother Mack was carrying a load of condemnation, as he knew mighty well that he should have sent Brother Lott word in the morning about Roan, and that he had hearkened to the voice of the Devil.

"Good evening, Brother Lott," said Brother Mack.
"'Brother Lott' forsooth!" whispered the Devil.

And Lott's aggressive moustache curled up at the corners and displayed his big front teeth as he replied: "Don't you 'Brother' me, you long-faced hypocrite. And if ever you again shut up a horse of mine, I'll paint your face so full of red, black, and blue spots that your own wife won't know you."

"Mack," whispered the Devil, "you are as big as he; tell him that you would like to see a sample of his painting and the way he does it."

But Brother Mack heard another voice saying: "Learn of Me. Give not railing for railing." And he answered: "Brother Lott, I'm sorry I didn't send you word about Roan in the morning, and I ask your forgiveness."

But the Devil saw a chance of entering into that man with seven others more ornery than himself, and he whispered: "Lott, you have him on the run."

And Lott's fierce moustache curled as he replied: "Forgive you? No! I'll see you where they burn long wood first—and then I won't." And Lott strode away, leading Roan.

And Brother Mack turned and leaned his head on the top bar; and, like Peter, he wept bitterly. But it was too late; the work was done. And the Devil was glad, and the angels were sorry; for if the angels rejoice over the one sinner that repenteth, they surely are sorry over the one that returneth to the service of the Devil and to his wallowing in the mire. And Lott concluded by saying: "He is the 'class leader,' and every Sunday morning the tears will drip like the early rain." And on Sunday morning Brother Mack made a public confession, and the tears dripped like the oil from Aaron's beard. But what did that avail? It did not snatch Lott from the snare of the Devil, neither did it silence the voice which kept on saying, "Brother Mack, you should have sent Brother Lott word about Roan in the morning."

Sister Lott was a pale, timid little woman. Brother Lott did not say, "You shan't go to meeting any more," but Sister Lott hardly ever went, and Brother Lott never any more. And when their little girl died, he would have nothing to do with the Davisites; but had Freck and Margaret and a girl friend to come over and sit through the night. And he buried her on his own farm, in the shade of a big spreading black oak.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Up to this time we had no school in our settlement. No school-house had been built. There were only nine families, and two of them had no children. But this fall we all met and repaired a little old log cabin. Puncheons were split for benches and pins driven into the wall for a writing-desk, the old stick chimney was redaubed with mud, and it was pronounced very good. And a master (teacher) was hired, David Mack. David was a nephew of Brother Mack, the class leader; he was a member of the United Brethren, and opened school by reading a chapter in the Bible. David and his father's household had come from the East; he was wintering in Davistown, and would go farther west in the spring. The master saw that Freck was timid, backward, silly, and bashful, but was much in earnest in his studies; so he went out of his way to help Freck along, and they became mighty good friends.

Becky and Freck were the oldest scholars and the farthest advanced. In reading Freck kept before Becky because he had been trained at home, but in spelling Becky kept Freck away from the head of the class almost all the time; however, in "figuring" they were equally yoked and worked along on the same page. The master adopted a rule of having the scholars help each other over the hard places. When Freck would come to him for help, he would say: "Rebekah, will you kindly show Freck [but he didn't say "Freck"] how to work this example?" And when Becky was perplexed, he would say: "Freck [only he didn't call him that], will you please assist Rebekah in solving this problem?" Now, at first this was awfully embarrassing, for Becky was quite as bashful as Freck; but a bashful girl can't act as silly as a bashful boy. They would sit on the backless bench, with a wide space between them, and each use their own slate; but in time they sat middling close together and used but one slate, and in their earnest endeavor to obtain the correct answer they would bend over the slate, and their heads would touch—just the littlest mite; and when the answer was aggravatingly obstinate, they would look away down into each other's eyes, hoping to solve the problem in that way. Freck felt the symptoms developing, and he was sure he was going to have another spell. Now, I don't think that Freck nor Becky purposely took advantage of the master, but it is possible that some of the examples could have been worked out alone; and it is also possible that the master, being young and his own wedding-day near at hand, took note thereof and turned his back and smiled.

Freck had not attended school since the stormy winter of 1851, and although he had not, even in his haphazard, hit-and-miss way, attended school five months in his life, yet he had a reputation among the settlers of being quite an advanced scholar; for the Father had given his boys lessons along the line of their business. So the settlers would bring their problems, and Freck would "figure" them up. Freck had attended school a month, and had got the taste of an education in his mouth and was doing his level best to learn to "figure" in fractions, and was building boyish castles in the air, to be used later on. But one Friday morning the Father called: "Freck, bring your books home to-night. I can't spare you any longer; those steers must be brought from Oak Grove." And at the noon hour Freck, in a state of dejection, sat alone by the fire, and the master sat down by his side and gave him much good advice. As Freck slowly trod the school path toward his home he resolved: "When I 'm my own man, I 'll have an education." And he stopped in the path and counted the years. Almost three years. Oh! how could he wait so long?

"Days and years revolve but slowly;
Time is tedious to the young;
In the hope of coming pleasure,
Oft we wish our days were gone.

"Soon they fly, we know not whither;
Age comes on us unawares;
All our hopes of coming pleasure
Pass away with passing years."

"The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley."

When Freck, with his books on his arm, walked out of the door of that little log-cabin school-house, he walked out of the school-room for the last time. Never again, as a pupil, did Freck cross the threshold of a school-room.

In the fall Freck made a journey on horseback, and when seventy-five miles out, he heard of John and Susan. John was Susan's husband, and Susan was Uncle John and Aunt Martha Dorr's daughter, and they were good friends of Freck and had moved away out in the West. Freck rode twenty miles out of his way to visit John and Susan, and they constrained him to stay over a day. On the morrow they took a horseback-ride, John and Susan and Freck; and they rode away down on the river and up through the tall timber, where the white man had made no trail. A bunch of deer jumped out of their beds and loped away, and a drove of wild turkeys rose up and flew across the river. They came to a deserted Indian village, and many of the bark wigwams were still standing; dismounting, they picked up some flint arrow-points. On the way home they came out onto a narrow strip of prairie, with a lone tree a quarter of a mile away, and John cried: "I can beat the bunch to the lone tree." Away they went, lickety-split, John and Susan and Freck; but John wasn't first by a rod. And in the morning John and Susan and Freck, in a glad and cheerful way, said "Good-bye," and Freck rode away, and they did not realize that it was for the last time.

How I would like, all things unchanged, to ride up to the gate of that cabin home and hear Susan exclaim, "Well, if here isn't Freck!" and feel John's strong arms dragging me from the saddle. No doubt John and Susan are sleeping the sleep that knows no waking until "the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall be no more, and the morning breaks, eternal, bright, and fair." Dear Lord, will John and Susan be there?

CHAPTER XIX.

The Father bought a steam saw-mill and set it up at the cross-roads, a mile from the farm; and this was the first steam saw-mill west of the Des Moines River. Margaret and Mildred would fetch the dinner to the mill with the little blue roan and the buggy, and new-sawn boards made the table.

The cold, stormy Winter drove past, a day at a time, and as he passed he flung the snow and the hail from his chariot-wheels into the cabins and the barns and into the coats of the herds and the flocks, and blew his icy breath across the prairies and through the woods. And all nature was clothed in mourning garments of frozen snow. And Winter, at the sight of the suffering, howled with delight and shrieked with gladness. But his joy was not forever; for the lovely young Spring of 1856, with smiles and with tears, drove up from the South, threw the reins over the hitching-post, blew her perfumed breath across the prairies and through the woods, and went right to work putting down a brand-new carpet of green and flowers. And the fathers and the mothers greeted her with songs, and the children shouted for joy, and the babies in the warm sunshine kicked and cooed, and all nature and all hearts were filled with gladness because Spring had come again.

The Father sold out on Half-way Prairie, mill and all, and again turned his face toward the setting sun, and again preparations were made to follow up and seek out and build a home on the western frontier.

Living an isolated home-life, Margaret and Freck were backward and timid and had not the tongue of the ready talker; but in brotherly and sisterly home-life few could have given them lessons. I cannot recall a cross word ever passing between them, and at home or driving over the wide prairie they were always companions.

The Father was waiting for the grass to grow to move his stock, and Freck saddled his iron gray pony and rode around to bid his young friends good-bye. One evening he was loitering in the grove and the sub-conscious Freck said: "Freck, you should ride over and bid Edith good-bye before you go away." So Freck saddled his pony, and riding around to the gate, he called: "Margaret, I shall not be at home to-night." In three hours he had passed over the twenty miles between, and was eating supper with Edith and Pete.

The next evening, after a delightful visit (for Edith could still talk most all the time, and Pete sat and never smiled nor said anything funny), Freck tied his horse to the rack and went in to say good bye. Edith, with her baby in her arms, walked out with Freck to the split picket gate, hinged with wooden hinges to the black oak tree;

and placing her baby on Freck's arms, and looking up into his eyes just like at the crossing of the line fence, she said: "Freck, don't you think he is a nice baby? Don't you think he is a pretty baby? Freck, don't you think that he looks like Pete?" Now, at this time, Freck was a mighty poor judge of babies; but Freck did think that he was the image of Pete, and the homeliest little squab he had ever set his eyes on. But right then and there Freck lied to Edith about her baby, like Jacob did to his old blind father about his hairy breast; and he answered: "Why, yes, I think he is real nice and awfully pretty—just as pretty as he can be, but I don't think he looks a mite like Pete; he has such lovely eyes—just like Edith's."

As Freck stood by the picket gate, with Edith's baby on his arms and looking into the same eyes, the crossing of the line fence, the bonnet-strings, and the sweet myrrh were all tangled up. And as Edith, with her arms underneath her baby to catch it should Freck lose his head and drop it, stood looking into Freck's eyes for the last time, who will dare to say that the path through the grove, the crossing of the line fence, and the sweet myrrh were not in her mind and kind-o'-pouty mouth?

The grass was grown and the stock was rounded up. So Freck harnessed a span of large, half-broken mares to one wagon, and he and Margaret, sitting on a box, with their feet dangling over the dashboard (for there were no spring seats in those days), led the procession; and the Father with the long string of oxen, and the Mother and the two little girls in a one-horse buggy, and the loose stock, driven by Will and Eck, following, they started on the one-hundred-and-fifty-mile journey to seek out and build a home on the western frontier. Jim had gone out from under the boughs of the old family tree, to fight alone the battles of life, and to conquer and be conquered in the many and vexing conflicts.

At the crossing of Big Cedar there came near being a tragedy. The roads were only dim trails and the banks were steep, and when Freck drove his half-wild team to the brink, they reared and plunged down the bank; and when the wagon pitched over the bank, Margaret and Freck, having no foot-brace, were thrown from the seat. Margaret instinctively whirled around and grasped her hands over the edge of the box and clung on for dear life, dangling between the horses and the wagon. The lines jerked Freck between the horses, and Freck instinctively grasped hold of the breeching and clung on for dear life. The wild horses snorted and plunged down the steep hill until they struck the water breast-deep, and then they stopped. Margaret, all of a tremble and as pale as a ghost, clambered back to her seat, and Freck disentangled himself from the breeching and climbed back onto the box. Margaret looked at Freck, and Freck looked at Margaret, but neither spoke. Each laughed a little silly laugh, but it availed nothing; for human nature sent the tears flowing over at the low places. Human nature, after a great strain, will find relief in tears or in swearing.

In the Big Cedar timber belt there was an Irish Colony, a lot of cabins built close together; but from there to Chariton, the county seat of Lucas County, there was not a house on the way. We carried wood and water, and went into camp when the sun shut the door. And every night the stove (for the Mother, for the first time, had a new cook stove) was taken from the wagon; for you must bear in mind that there were eight to be fed, besides old Shep. And when a young colt or calf came into camp, there would be a day or two for shooting blue crane and plover. So the trip was a kind of picnic.

On the White Breast there was a narrow belt of timber and a few settlers, and then from White Breast to Osceola, the county seat of Clark County, there was not a house; and from Osceola to Afton, the county seat of Union County, there was not a house on the road. Afton consisted of three unfinished cabins and some covered wagon-boxes.

To avoid crossing the streams, the trail followed the divides, winding along on the high prairie and adding many miles to the distance traveled. To the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, as far as the eye could reach, was a boundless expanse of wild meadow; the grass waving in the breeze, and the wild flowers smiling up at the sun, spending their fragrance on the desert air, and bowing their heads to the passer-by. Far away across the prairie was seen little groves of timber; and no doubt a settler had sought out these isolated islands in the prairie sea, and was building a home on the western frontier.

As Margaret and Freck drove slowly along, day after day, in the midst of these wild and romantic scenes, they indulged in day-dreaming, as all young people love to do at a certain age, when they are having a spell; and in singing the songs so common at the time:

"Roll on, silver moon, guide the traveler on his way,
Whilst the nightingale's song is in tune;
For I never, never more with my true love will stray,
By the soft silver light of the moon."

"'Twas a calm, still night, and the moon's pale light
Shone soft o'er hill and vale;
And friends mute with grief stood around the death-bed
Of my long-lost Lilly Dale.
Oh, Lilly! Dear Lilly! Sweet Lilly Dale!
Now the wild rose blossoms o'er her little green grave
'Neath the trees in the flowery vale."

"A home in the wildwood, a cot in the grove,
A hut in the valley with the one that I love;
I care not how humble, how lowly it be,
If one faithful heart only share it with me."

"To share thy joys, to soothe thy care;
With thee my every thought to share;
With thee in mutual love to live—
'Tis all I ask of Heaven to give."

"The heart feels most when the lips move not,
And the eyes speak a gentle farewell."

"Her brow is like the snow-drift,
Her throat is like the swan;
Her face it is the fairest
That e'er the sun shone on,
That e'er the sun shone on;
And she's all the world to me;
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I'd lay me down and dee."

And many others, most of which have sunken to the bottom of the sea of forgetfulness; but a few broken fragments are still floating around, entangled in the seaweed of memory. To these simple-hearted children of the log cabin and the borderland these simple songs were all-sufficient; the sentiments were in harmony with the surroundings, and fitted into the mental structure which their youthful imaginations were building.

When they would pass a lone cabin in which there was a post-office, they would be met at the door by the postmistress; and they would hand her a couple of letters, addressed "Half-way Prairie," and they would turn away feeling sure that she knew all about it; and they would tell each other: "Oh, pshaw! We don't care. We will never pass this way again." And they surely never did.

Margaret and Freck would sit in the moonlight and in the starlight and talk of the glad things the coming years held in store for them, and they wished that the tardy years would make haste. Dear patient and merciful Lord, the years have come and gone; but they did not deliver the goods.

CHAPTER XX.

We came to the East Nodaway River, and we went into camp over Sunday. Here was a belt of timber, and also the French Colony, a socialistic community of interest, a colony composed of men only; they had all things in common, all ate at the same table, and all went to work and knocked off work at the ringing of the bell. These Frenchmen, in breathing the wind that swept over the western prairies, breathed in the spirit of American independence and the spirit of individual ownership, and the beautiful and fragrant plant of socialistic community of interest withered and died; and the better colonists began to slip away, to acquire individual ownership in horses, cows, and sheep, and a wife and a home; and the French Colony broke up, just as all such colonies will do if composed of men with healthy views of life, ordinary ambition, and a measure of intelligence.

On Monday morning we continued on our way. Passing through Quincy, then county seat of Adams County, a city of two cabins, and coming to the Middle River, we drove down the valley; here we passed a settler breaking prairie, and living by the side of a log and in the covered wagon-box; and his wife and daughter planting sod corn, beans, and other stuff, to live on during the winter; and the cabin would be built later on. And this is the way the old pioneers blazed the trail and encroached upon the wilderness, and built for themselves homes on the western frontier.

How little do the present generation know of the sufferings, the privations, the hardships, and the scant living encountered and endured by the early pioneers all along the frontier. Where are the hardy men and women who made up the advance guard, the picket-line of civilization, who pushed back the blood-thirsty savage, and went forth with ox team, gun, and axe and built their cabins where stood the wigwams, and plowed up the pasture of the buffalo, the elk, the deer, and the antelope? They are fast passing away. The great enemy, Death, has gathered the great majority into his cold, cruel arms; and over many graves of true, faithful wives and tender, loving mothers the plowshare is passing; and the plowman knows not that it is holy ground.

Between the Middle and the West Nodaway rivers there was timber and three or four cabins; the only houses, except in the towns, passed in more than a hundred miles. What a mighty change has taken place in sixty years! On the west bank of the West Nodaway there was a cabin, and in this cabin was a post-office, called Sciola; and this was the only post-office in Montgomery County. And down the valley was the Dunn Settlement. We camped here for the night. The next morning we drove to the northwest to Bear Grove; here there were two settlers. And here we left the trail and drove south across the trackless prairie to Red Oak Grove; and there was one settler here. We went into camp on Red Oak Creek, in the valley of the East Nishnabotna River, on the very ground where now stands the beautiful city of Red Oak, a city of many thousands, and we remained in camp here for two weeks. And we rode and drove over the country for many miles, looking for a location, and found it not; for the only timber was a few willows and cottonwoods in the bends of the river, and not a mile of railroad in the State to fetch in lumber.

At Silket's Grove, three miles north, there were three settlers; north of Silket's Grove there was not a settler for more than a hundred miles, and south two or three miles was Singleton's Grove and three cabins; the next settlement to the south was at Walden's Grove, in Missouri. To the west there were no settlers until we came to the West Nishnabotna River, in Mills County, and here was a mill, called the White Cloud Mill, and the Summers Settlement. And here, at White Cloud, a bridge spanned the West Nishnabotna River; the only bridge encountered on the way. I have crossed the great and grand State of Iowa from the Mississippi River, the eastern boundary, to the West Nishnabotna River, within twenty-five miles of the Missouri River, the western boundary, and never crossed a bridge; forded every stream except the Skunk River and the Des Moines River, and with ox teams. Every night I slept on the ground or in the wagon. The Skunk and the Des Moines rivers were crossed on rope ferries.

East of Red Oak Creek several miles, and on a high level divide, stood the city of Frankford, the then county seat of Montgomery County; and three unfinished log cabins made up the city of Frankford. Uncle John and Aunt Anna lived in one of these unfinished cabins, and Aunt Anna kept house by the side of a log in Red Oak Grove while the cabin was being built. The logs were taken off of "Congress land," and this was the last house ever built in the city of Frankford. There was also a log court-house. The clapboard roof was on, but there were only holes cut in the walls for windows; the cracks between the logs were neither chinked nor daubed, and the floor was of loose boards laid on the pole joists. Old Doctor Bond lived in one of the cabins, and sat on a bench in the court-house alone. The mail was delivered once a week, at Sciola post-office, ten miles away; and Freck and Margaret had to go to Sciola post-office, fifteen miles from camp, to receive the answers to their letters addressed "Half-way Prairie."

Down the East Nishnabotna valley, in Fremont County, was the little Mormon settlement, or "stake of Zion," Manti. When the Prophet Joseph, by the Gentiles called "Joe Smith," was murdered, and the Saints driven from Nauvoo, they turned their faces toward the setting sun, to seek a refuge from the Gentiles and a resting-place for the Tabernacle of the Lord. They crossed the Mississippi River on the ice, and camped in the snow and the rain and the winter storms. And when they got beyond the Gentile settlements, and came to timber, they would drop off a few

Saints to provide a way-station on the way to Zion. And this was called "driving a stake of Zion."

By special "revelation," the Prophet Joseph was directed to go into the land of Shinehah, and there, on the borders of the Lamanites, locate the New Jerusalem, the city of Zion. And the gates should be open to the lost tribe of the house of Israel. In obedience to the divine "revelation," the Prophet Joseph journeyed to the border of the Lamanites and the land of Shinehah, and located the New Jerusalem, the city of Zion, at Independence, Jackson County, Missouri. But the wicked Gentile Missourians contended with the Saints, that they had not crossed the Jordan, and were not in the land of Shinehah, nor on the border of the Lamanites. And the Gentile Missourians said, "Move on across the Jordan." And they brought many arguments to bear to persuade the Saints, in the shape of rifles, shot-guns, and horse-pistols. And the Saints moved on across the Missouri River, and the Gentile Missourians profited thereby; for they bought the land of the Saints at hold-up prices. And the Saints drove another "stake of Zion" in Clay County. And again the Gentile Missourians said, "Move on." And the Saints moved on. And they drove another "stake of Zion" in the wilderness of Ray County. And the Saints thought surely they had reached the land of Shinehah and the borders of the Lamanites this time; and they drove another "stake of Zion."

And it was "revealed" to Joseph the Prophet, and he sent forth a proclamation to the Saints scattered abroad: "Thus said the Lord: Sell your possessions, and rally around; and make strong Zion's stake in the wilderness." And with this end in view a military organization, called "Zion's Camp," was armed, "to redeem the New Jerusalem" and to hold the stakes in the wilderness. The Prophet was the general, and Brigham, one of the twelve Apostles and the one that Joseph loved, was a captain. And then followed the battles of Crooked River and Haun's Mill. But Achan had hid a goodly garment or a wedge of gold among his stuff (Joshua vii. 21), and the Saints were defeated, and Joseph the Prophet was taken prisoner. And again the Saints signed deeds, in the presence of the Gentiles with guns in their hands. And one of the twelve Apostles was killed in the battle of Crooked River, and one forsook the Saints and fled and joined hands with the Gentiles.

And Brigham became the head corner-stone of the Quorum of the Twelve. And Brigham proceeded to organize the broken and peeled hosts of Zion into companies, to again take up the weary march in search of the land of Shinehah and the borders of the Lamanites; for the Gentile Missourians, with guns in their hands, said, "Move on and cross the border." And Joseph the Prophet had been cast into prison. And Brigham stood at the head of the Quorum of the Twelve. But the Gentiles pressed hard after Brigham; and Brigham fled, and left the hosts of the Latter-Day Saints to the tender mercies of the Gentile Missourians, with guns in their hands. Ragged, destitute, hungry, and footsore, the Saints, men, women, and children, trailed on toward the land of Shinehah and the borders of the Lamanites. And they knew not where they were going; but they could not do otherwise than to go forward, for the Gentile Missourians were in the rear, with guns in their hands to see that they crossed the border. Their flight was in the winter; but in time, through snow, sleet, rain-storms, and Missouri mud, the long, straggling line of mothers, carrying babies to lighten the load, and clad in tattered garments, and the poverty-stricken oxen, horses, cows, and sheep, reached the border and crossed the Mississippi River on the ice into Illinois. And they had marked the line of the Old Mormon Trail with the wreckage of wagons, with the bones of animals, and with new-made graves. And the Gentile Missourians returned to their warm and cheery firesides, to tell how they had braved the snow, the hail, the rain, and the Missouri mud, and had driven the Mormon women and children, and also the men, from the sacred soil of grand old Missouri.

And the Saints made sure that this time they had reached the land of Shinehah and the borders of the Lamanites. And they drove another "stake of Zion" on the eastern bank of the Mississippi River, at a place called "Commerce"; but when the Prophet Joseph was set at liberty and joined the congregation of the Lord, he named it "the stake of Zion, Nauvoo." But the spiritual, mystic meaning of the name "Nauvoo" was holden from the people; only to a few choice souls did the Prophet divulge the mystic meaning of "Nauvoo." And the Saints built cabins and booths, and plowed, planted, reaped, and gathered into granaries; for the Saints were an industrious and frugal people. And they began building the great Nauvoo Temple, around which the Latter-Day Saints were to rally, and go forth to conquer the world. And they hewed out the twelve great stone oxen, very lifelike, on whose backs rested the great stone lavatory. And one day in ten, and one bushel of grain in ten, and one calf, one lamb, and one chicken in ten belonged to the Lord. And the Prophet was the Lord's agent.

Between Nauvoo and the river there was a swampy strip of land, and when the tall grass and reeds were bitten by the frost, and the water was drying up, and the hot sun shining, this place became an ideal incubator for fever and ague. And the hosts of Zion were prostrated; even the Prophet and his family did not escape. But the power of the Lord rested on Joseph, and he arose from his bed; and first he commanded his own household to arise and be made whole. And they were made whole in that same hour. And the Prophet went from cabin to cabin, and from tent to tent, calling, "In the name of Israel's God, I command you to be made whole." And they arose and followed him. And coming to the house of the head of the Quorum of the Twelve, where he lay tossing in a raging fever, he cried, "Brother Brigham, in the name of the Lord, I command you to arise." And Brother Brigham sprang from his bed and joined the procession. And they came to the cabin of Elijah Fordham. Now, Brother Elijah was in the act of dying; but Joseph cried, "Brother Elijah, in the name of the Lord, I command you to arise." And Brother Elijah leaped from the bed and called for his garments. And in all the camp of Zion there was not one who said, "I am sick." Now, I had this from the lips of Latter-Day Saints whose word would be taken in a court of justice, but I can't believe it.

And the Prophet Joseph sent a proclamation from stake to stake: "Sell your possessions and rally around the stake of Zion, Nauvoo." And they came with wives and children, and flocks and herds, and spread out over the land. And they gathered unto themselves much substance, and grew in number; but they did not grow in favor with the people of the land.

And the Lord called unto Joseph saying: "Joseph, my servant." And Joseph the Prophet answered: "Here am I. Speak, Lord." And the Lord said: "Send missionaries across the big waters." And Joseph sent Brigham and others to England. And soon a shipload of Saints arrived to make strong the stake of Zion, Nauvoo. And others followed in quick succession. And when their numbers were increased, the Gentiles living in the land were induced to join the Saints or cross the border.

How do I know this? I will tell you.

James C——, a sturdy old Scotch Seceder, and others of like faith, were dwellers in the land (but they did not know that it was the land of Shinehah) before the coming of the Saints; and after their coming the Saints compassed land and sea to make proselytes, and they did make proselytes. And you can learn the result by reading the fifteenth verse of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. And James C——, the sturdy old Scotch Seceder, and the others, who could not be proselyted, soon felt the iron hand; their cows, horses, and sheep strayed away and could not be found. And they sold their possessions at hold-up prices.

How do I know all this? Well, I can tell you.

James C——, the Scotch Seceder and sturdy old soldier, who fought under General Harrison in the War of 1812, and who received a land warrant and carried it for forty years between the leaves of the old family Bible, had an only daughter, Mary, who remembered the Temple and the great stone oxen with their eyes of life. And Mary became the wife of the writer, and from her lips and the lips of her mother he learned much of which he cares not to write at this late date.

The Father's brother Will, a stripling of eighteen years, was a soldier in the War of 1812, and helped Perry win the memorable battle of Lake Erie. And the Father, a lad of twelve years, and his widowed mother stood by the door of their cabin home and listened to the booming of the cannon on Lake Erie's blood-stained wave.

It was "revealed" to Joseph that the Saints would rule the world. And the Saints nominated Joe Smith for President of the United States of America, and organized the Nauvoo Legion; and with banners and guns they marched through the streets of Zion and jostled the Gentiles. And the Prophet Joseph was the general. And an anti-Josephite paper was published in Zion; for Zion was full of schism and schemers and ambitious Saints. And the Prophet said: "Pull down and destroy the enemy of the Lord and His Zion." And it was done. And a warrant was sworn out for the arrest of the Prophet and others; but the arrest could not be made, for the Legion had orders to permit no Gentile foot to walk the streets of the holy city. And the Governor ordered out the State Militia. The Prophet Joseph and other leaders slipped across the Mississippi River and were hastening toward the place where the sun goes down, but they were intercepted and brought back and lodged in the Carthage jail. The jail was broken into by a mob, and the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hiram were murdered. The perpetrators were brought to trial, but were honorably acquitted.

The Saints were as sheep without a shepherd, and there was great apprehension; and there was also much scheming among the leaders, for many were willing to wear Joseph's mantle. And the head of the Quorum of the Twelve was away on a mission in the East. But, always having the interest of Zion (closely connected with Brigham's interest) at heart, he made haste to get within the gates of Zion. And Brigham in his masterful manner grasped the reins, and ordered the whole congregation of the Saints to assemble in holy convocation on the morrow. On the morrow the multitudes were gathered together, and the head of the Quorum of the Twelve arose and cried: "O ye saints of the Most High! O ye congregation of the Lord! Do I find you mourning for your prophet as the Israelites mourned for Moses? No; I find you scheming and pulling to get into Joseph's shoes. Now, I say, let every man stand up before the congregation of the Lord and state his claims to the succession." Whereupon Brother Sidney Rigdon arose and for an hour and a half he made clear his claim to the succession; and higher and higher he climbed the ladder, until he stood on the topmost round and was putting forth his hand to grasp the mantle, when Brigham arose and gave the ladder a kick, and Brother Sidney fell. And Brigham boldly declared that the Prophet Joseph, a long time ago, had bestowed on him the Prophet's endowments; and no man could come between him and the Prophet. And he, as the head of the Quorum of the Twelve, held the keys to the kingdom. And Brigham succeeded to the succession.

Meantime the Gentiles stood afar off, awaiting the resuit, and keeping their powder dry. And they cried: "Cross the border, or suffer the consequences." And the Saints crossed the border, the Mississippi River, and also suffered the consequences. The first section, led by Charles Shumway, to the number of four hundred wagons, left their cosy cabin homes and again started out in search of the land of Shinehah and the borders of the Lamanites. They camped the first night on Sugar Creek, nine miles out, on February 4th. The winter weather was bitterly cold, and the Saints scraped away the snow and made their beds on the frozen ground or in the wagons. And the first night, in covered wagons, the winter wind flapping the covers and making merry swirling the snow into their tender little faces, nine babies were born. I wonder, can those babies point with pride to the time and the circumstances of their birth?

Day after day they toiled on through snow-storms and rain across the trackless prairie. The oxen could be fed but a light ration, and they became weak and jaded, and many died. And when a wagon got "stuck in the mud," often ten yoke of oxen were required to move the load. On coming to timber, they would drive a "stake of Zion." And still they toiled on toward the land of Shinehah, marking the Old Mormon Trail with the wreckage of wagons, with the bones of animals, and with new-made graves; the graves of tiny babies, the young wife, the old grandmother, and the coarse and profane man. Some of the graves were marked by a bit of slab split from a log, but without name or date; but the greater number were marked only by a slit in the prairie sod. And from those sunken graves the tall prairie flowers grew and nodded their heads to the passing breeze and turned their smiling faces up to heaven; but they could not tell the passer-by whether it was a tender-hearted wife and mother or a coarse and vulgar man that slept at their feet.

Many hundreds of miles have I traveled along the Old Mormon Trail, but only one grave was marked by a stone. Rudely thereon was chiseled:

"J. EASTMAN.
1846."

And as I stood by the lone grave, as in a dream, I again saw the long train of covered wagons, drawn by the long string of jaded oxen, passing along the trail; and again

I heard the shout of the drivers and the crack of the long whip; and again I saw in the rear the long "push-cart train," hand-carts filled with bundles and babies, and by weary mothers, with tattered garments and shoes lashed on with thongs, pushed before them, because there was no room in the wagons; and in the rear of the push-carts other mothers, carrying babies in their arms and leading one by the hand, and often a third clinging to their skirts, because the hand-carts were too few. And step by step they were dragging themselves toward the city of Zion, firm in the belief that in Zion they would find tranquil rest for evermore; for the Mormon women were kept in a state of religious hysteria, and they thought of Zion, as others think of Heaven.

To show the religious frenzy to which the women were carried, I will only relate one incident. I could give many. A passing train stopped at the spring to fill the water-jugs, and Uncle Reub, who had one short leg and a red head and was of an inquisitive turn of mind, hobbled up to one of the wagons, which was filled with girls and young women, and inquired: "Where are you girls going, and what are you going for?" And one of the girls clasped her hands over her head, and looking up to Heaven, she almost shrieked: "We are going to the city of Zion, to see Jesus!" Poor deluded children! They left their homes assured that this mental dream would be realized. They would not find the Master in Zion; but they would find many possessed with the same spirit that ran down the mountain-side and scared the swine into the sea. And they would be lined up, and those in authority would take first choice; and they would become "Five," "Seven," or "Come, Eleven." And they would be allotted a plot of ground and a cabin, and they would be required to cultivate the ground, and to bear children and bring them up for soldiers to fight the Gentiles and conquer the world; for this purpose they were fetched out to Zion.

There was a purpose in the absence of markers at the graves: the leaders did not design to mark the highway to Zion with gravestones. The pilgrims should not come up to the New Jerusalem singing, "Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound," but rather with music and dancing. And we find that the very first night out, while some were in pain, travelling to be delivered, the snow was scraped away and others were "tripping the light fantastic toe" to the strains of "The Arkansaw Traveler" or "The Devil's Dream."

CHAPTER XXI.

There were many "stakes of Zion," fifty years ago, along the Old Mormon Trail; but the on-rushing Gentiles have trampled their names from the face of the earth. There were Manti, Moroni, Nephi, Bethlehem, Crescent, Macedonia, Preparation, Mount Pisgah, Jordan, Lehi, and others; in all of which I have left the print of my feet in the sand. I wonder, could I go back to-day and follow the dim trails across the prairies from stake to stake? I can see the landscape unchanged: the dim trails winding along the divides, the cabins snuggled away in the groves, the smoke curling up from the stick chimneys; and away over yonder, beyond the Honey Creek hills, is the crossing of the Jordan, and across the prairie to the eastward, just visible through the smoky haze, is Macedonia Grove and the camp of Nephi. And I see a light-hearted, freckle-faced lad cantering along on the trail. Oh, those boyhood days! so free from care; not anxious for the morrow; before the evil days, which come sooner or later into every life, had come.

When the moving hosts of the Saints struck the Missouri River, they spread to the north and to the south; but the principal stake was at Kanesville, now called Council Bluffs, because an Indian council was held at the foot of the river bluffs, where the little creek comes out of the hills onto the Missouri River valley. Peter A. Sarpee, an old Frenchman, who lived with the Indians and had squaw wives, and for whom Sarpee County, Nebraska, was named, had a trading station at Council Bluffs. And the Indians were good Indians or bad Indians in harmony with old Peter's variable moods.

Brigham, as a prophet, did not attain to the stature of Joseph, but he did some work along that line; but as an organizer and a leader, and in the knowledge of human nature, Brigham was a Goliath and Joseph but a shepherd lad. Brigham realized that when the slow and wearisome journey of six months, with the continual physical effort and mental strain, would be ended, and the hosts took up the tame life of the camp, there would be a reaction and a feeling of unrest, ending in a hankering after the leeks and onions of Egypt, and the willows would be bended low with the unused harps of Zion's daughters; and also, that Satan finds some mischief for idle hands to do. But Brigham proposed in his heart that few harps should dangle on the willows, and that there should be but few idle hands to tempt Satan; for Brigham's motto was, "Keep 'em busy and loyal to the Church." And a great booth, called "the Pavilion," was builded; and in the evenings the old and the young, the gay and the sad, the handsome and the unhandsome, the good dancers and the bad dancers, and the elders and the Apostles, would assemble. And when the fiddles had been twanged, an Apostle or an elder would step forward and offer a fervent prayer to Heaven for divine guidance in the exercises of the evening; then he would grab a handsome daughter of Zion, and go whirling down the Pavilion in the heart-to-heart waltz or the exhilarating galop. And to this day, wherever you find a "stake of Zion," you will find a dancing people. If this was pleasing in the sight of Heaven, what a lot the old-time Methodists and the others cut out of their lives!

At Nauvoo the beloved—and Nauvoo was beloved by the common people; for the great majority of the old-time Saints were recruited from the rural districts and were a simple-minded, honest, and home-loving people, and had descended from the old Puritan stock. Were they fanatical? Yes, to the last extreme. Believing that Joseph was a true prophet of the Lord, they obeyed without a reason or back talk. At Nauvoo there had been dissatisfaction and scheming in secret places, but the Gentiles, by their insistent urging to move on, had checked these things. But Brigham had not forgotten them; neither had he forgotten the parties thereto. One morning a score of wagons moved out of camp and down to the Missouri River, and were ferried over into the Territory of Nebraska, and another "stake of Zion" was driven, called "Florence," seven miles above where the city of Omaha was afterwards located. And from day to day others were transferred to Florence, until the camps were about half and half; and a mile-wide river rolled between the schemers. And Brigham proclaimed: "All who wish to have a part in Zion have got to toe the mark." And Brigham, the wonderful controller of men, had won out.

CHAPTER XXII.

I am not writing Mormon history, but many years of my life were spent among these people, and I want that you should know something of the privations and hardships of these "fanatical people" in their wanderings in search of the land of Shinehah and the borders of the Lamanites. It is always the mothers that suffer the most, and because the wagons were too few for the multitude, there were provided hand-carts, and these were called "the push-cart train," because the women pushed them before them; for they could more easily push them than pull them. And the long "push-cart train," filled with bundles and babies, and pushed by mothers in tattered garments and shoes lashed on with thongs and gaunt with hunger, followed in the rear of the wagon train. And others, because the push-carts were too few, dragged themselves along, carrying a baby in their arms, and often leading another by the hand. Much of the time they subsisted on corn alone, which they parched and ground in coffee-mills, and with water only it was baked into cakes. And the mothers, that the babies might have the more, skimped themselves. Blankets were spread on the frozen ground, and in their rain-soaked garments they folded their babies close and spent the night on the wind-swept prairie. And in the morning many of these tender, loving mothers were carried to an unmarked grave by the side of the Old Mormon Trail.

There is a big tumult just now being made about the marking of the Old Santa Fé Trail. There is more womanly heroism, more tender, loving, unselfish, motherly self-denial, more true wifely devotion, more self-sacrifice buried in one mile along the Old Mormon Trail than there is in the whole dod-darned Old Santa Fé Trail, from the one end of the trail to the other. And when the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall be no more, and all that are in the graves shall come forth, there will be a lane of open graves along the Old Mormon Trail.

Old Father Enos was a tall, slim down-east Yankee; for you know that Mormonism was born and laid aside swaddling-clothes and put on pants among the Yankees. Father Enos spoke in an unknown tongue in meeting.

Father Enos had a son-in-law, Dan, and Dan was the best Mormon I ever knew; Dan never swore and Dan said grace at table. Dan was of old Puritan stock and had to be good. Dan and Freck were neighbors and friends, and in the fall they rode the range together, rounding up their cattle. Dan was a Josephite and an elder, and Dan preached to Freck, and Freck read the Book of Mormon and many Mormon books and papers. And Freck knows more about the early history of the Mormons and their peculiar religious belief than three-fourths of the members, including the elders. (The Mormons call their preachers "elders.") Father Enos was getting old and loved to talk about the past, and Freck was young and loved to hear about the long ago.

At the first he was poor, unknown, and unlearned, and he was called "Joe Smith"; but an angel visited him, and he became "the Prophet Joseph." But the Gentiles still persisted in calling him "Joe Smith." It came about in this way: There was a sacred hill, Cumorah. But no one knew that it was sacred, neither did they know that it was Cumorah. And an angel was sent. Now, this angel was not a sure-enough, old-time angel; but was made an angel for a purpose. He had lived and died simply as Moroni, the son of Mormon. Mormon was a mighty prophet and historian, and he wrote a history of the lost tribe of the house of Israel, and also many prophecies which should come to pass hereafter. Mormon wrote in the old Egyptian hieroglyphic sign-writing, engraven on golden plates; and when Mormon was nearing the end, he called his son Moroni and committed the golden plates to his keeping; and when Moroni was called upon to pass through the gate into the blackness of the darkness and sleep with his fathers, he buried the golden plates in the sacred hill Cumorah. And then Moroni died; and Moroni remained dead for fourteen hundred years, and then he was called from the dead for the express purpose of leading Joe Smith (for he was yet only the humble and unknown Joe Smith) to the sacred hill Cumorah; for only Moroni knew where the golden plates were buried. Notwithstanding the changes that had taken place while he slept, Moroni walked right up to the place and said: "Joseph, dig." And Joseph digged, and uncovered a bale of golden plates, and also two kidney-shaped pebbles; and the angel and Joseph called the pebbles "urim and thummim," but by those a little lower than the angel and Joseph they were called "seer-stones," and by others they were called "peep-stones." And the angel directed Joseph to place a golden plate, one at a time, in the bottom of his tall hat, and place the two pebbles on the plates, and look through them; and, wonder of wonders, behold, the Egyptian hieroglyphic sign-writing appeared in plain English print! And Joseph read it, and Oliver Cowdry, the scribe, wrote it in a book; hence the name, "Book of Mormon." And when this work was done, Joseph was commissioned a prophet.

When the Prophet Joseph went forth to publish abroad this new religion, to prophesy, and to call for recruits, Enos was among the first to stand up and cry, "Here am I; send me." Joseph sent them from the sacred hill Cumorah, in the State of New York, to Kirtland, Ohio, where they drove a "stake of Zion" and had a lot of wrangling among themselves; for some said, "Joseph is no prophet." And then Joseph the Prophet sent them on to Zion's city, at Independence, Missouri, where they were to build the Temple, around which the Saints would rally and go forth to conquer the world. And when the battles of Crooked River and Haun's Mill were fought, Enos was still crying, "Here am I; send me." On that journey of suffering and privation toward the border, when the Gentile Missourians, with guns in their hands, marched in the rear, Enos piloted a lank team of oxen. The slight and tenderly reared wife of his young manhood, who had left her father's pleasant home in the East and had placed her hand in his hand, saying, "Enos, where thou goest I will go, and thy people shall be my people," she had fallen by the wayside, and her last resting-place was an unmarked grave by the side of the Old Mormon Trail. She left Enos two little girls, who had grown into the slight form and tender, clinging nature of their mother; and one became the wife of Dan. And when the Gentiles again cried, "Move on, and leave Nauvoo the beloved behind your back," Enos (and Enos had married again) guided an ox team toward the land of Shinehah. Enos had spent a long lifetime seeking the land of Shinehah, and Enos had become bitter through oft disappointment. And as Freck the young and Enos the aged sat of a summer evening, Enos for the last time placed his hand on Freck's shoulder, saying:

"Brother Freck, you are young; so once was I. My long life has been filled with toil and privation, and there has been but little good in it, and it does seem hard to have to die and go to Hell at last." And a few days thereafter his dappled grays ran away and dragged Enos to death.

I could fill a book with the stories told me by the old-time Saints, who were old when I was young.

There was a division in the Church of Latter-Day Saints. The better class withdrew, and formed the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints; but the names were too long for the common people, and they were called "Brighamites" and "Josephites." The Josephites revolted at polygamy, and blood atonement, and the power of the husband over the wife, and the scene in Eden, and the Danites or the Avenging Angels, and sealing, and many other sensual things, which were abhorrent to the moral and refined sense of the Josephites.

Perhaps you do not fully understand "sealing" in its fulness. It is quite a simple affair. Should a Brighamite cast his sensual eyes upon a lovely Gentile woman, wife or maid, he has her "sealed" to him for eternity. And the power of the husband over the wife worked real well by the side of polygamy. You see, the wife is dependent on her husband for her resurrection; and should one of the many lose her sweetness of temper, Jonathan would simply remark: "Mandy, you will have a danged long sleep."

Joseph, the son of the Prophet, stands at the head of the Josephites. I have heard him preach. He was not a fluent speaker, but he was a grave and earnest man, with a spice of dignity, and left a good impression.

Undoubtedly you have read of a certain personage (Genesis iii. 1) who was more subtle than all the beasts of the field which the Lord made in the creation. The Brighamite leaders are sure a subtle lot. They do easily devise means whereby they circumvent the laws enacted by the combined and ponderous wisdom of the Congress of the United States and evade the constitutional requirements of the several States, and go right on multiplying and increasing the number of the Saints by way of plurality of wives, who are not wives and whose children are illegitimate in the eyes of the law of the land, but who are wives by the mightier power, the edict of the Mormon Church. And not only this, but they shake their fists in the face of the court of Heaven. It is written in the Magna Charta of Heaven: "In that world they neither marry nor are given in marriage." There are beasts of prey that hunt in pairs. The Brighamites send out young athletic missionaries in pairs, two and two, saying: "Go ye; and as ye go preach the gospel according to Mormon, and make proselytes. And as ye go [this is not written into the commission] keep your eyes open for the lovely wives and daughters of the wicked Gentiles. And this shall be your hire." And with rejoicing they go forth, without money and without price. David, the king and psalm-writer, said: "I was glad when they said unto me, Come up to the house of the Lord." And surely the hearts of those returning athletic missionaries must tingle with gladness when it is said unto them: "Come up to the House of Endowment, and we will seal unto you the lovely Gentile wives and daughters you have chosen. And we will smile at the vain efforts of the court of Heaven to set aside your marriage; for what we seal on earth is bound in Heaven to all eternity." My Gentile brother, have you a lovely wife or daughter? Beware of those who hunt in pairs.

CHAPTER XXIII.

For two weeks we remained in camp on Red Oak Creek, in the valley of the East Nishnabotna River, on the ground where now stands the beautiful city of Red Oak. We rode and drove over the country for many miles, seeking a location, but found it not; for the country was only a great sea of magnificent prairie, and no pioneer could build a home without rails and logs.

One evening a young man and wife, with four yoke of oxen, came down the trackless divide and went into camp. They were sun-tanned and travel-worn; for they had been a long time on the way, having come from Illinois. He tramped around looking for a location, and selected a little grove on the Tarkio, and they moved their camp into the grove. His name was Dinwiddy, and they set up housekeeping by the side of a log. He cut and snaked out the logs for a cabin, and she helped saw the clapboard blocks; and she drove the oxen to roll up logs, while he kept them on the skids; and she passed up the clapboards, and he placed them on the roof; and the house was completed. Of course the earth was the floor, and windows there was none, and the door was made of split slabs and fastened to the wooden hinges with wooden pins; but they moved in and called it our home, and they sat in their cabin home and listened to the wind whispering among the trees and to the rustling of the leaves, and they spoke softly of the old home and hopefully of the new home on the western frontier. Meeting the Father one day, Mr. Dinwiddy said: "Mr. L——, I want to trade you a yoke of oxen for a horse; for you know we are living away out there by ourselves." And the Father gave him a young horse for a yoke of oxen and twenty dollars.

And the lovely, smoky, hazy, melancholy autumn days moved in and went into camp along the bends of the creeks, and painted the leaves yellow and red; and the wind stirred the long beard on the face of the prairie, and moaned and sobbed in the tree-tops, and piled the red and yellow leaves in heaps, and filled the heart with a solemnly glad sadness. And one night Mr. Dinwiddy galloped to Frankford and galloped home again; and Uncle John, with Doctor Bond and his wife and Aunt Anna, drove quickly to the cabin in the grove. And they watched through the night while the girl wife passed the night in convulsions. Just as the sun was showing his smiling face above the rim of the earth, for the sun paid no heed to the sorrow and the anguish in the cabin home, there was a few moments of quiet; and looking up into Aunt Anna's face, she asked: "Aunt Anna, does the Bible not say, 'They shall be saved in childbearing'?" And Aunt Anna pressed her cheek against her cheek and bathed it with her tears as she answered: "Yes, my dear child, the Bible does say, 'They shall be saved in childbearing.'" Again a paroxysm of pain laid hold on her, and she raised up and cried out in travail, and fell back on the pillows; and Nature gave over the struggle, and all was still—the stillness of death. Strange but tender hands prepared her for her burial. Poor girl! so young, and her heart filled with the beautiful hopes of youth, and so earnestly endeavoring to build a home on the western frontier. Some boards were taken from the courthouse floor and a rough coffin was made, and a grave was dug in the grove under a great spreading oak, and strangers carried her out, and with no minister to read the burial service, she and her unborn babe were lowered into the dark and silent grave. The autumn wind sobbed as it passed by, and the old oak dropped his tears of red and yellow leaves upon her coffin, and the sun dropped a cloud vail over his face while the clods of the valley were placed over her; and the strangers turned their faces toward their homes. Mr. Dinwiddy remained in his cabin home during the winter, with his oxen and his horse and the lone grave to keep him company.

The camel, on the edge of the great sand desert, kneels down and receives her burden, bound with cords, and struggles to her feet and starts out into the desolation of drifting sand; and when the burden of sorrow is laid at our feet, like the camel of the desert, we kneel down and with the cords of memory bind it to our heart, and struggle to our feet and pass out into the sand-drifted desolation of life.

The next fall Freck rode past the lone, forsaken cabin; the sun was closing the door and calling to the stars to come out, and the darkening twilight shadows were seeking a resting-place. And the silence was broken by the plaintive voice of a bird bereaved of his mate; but she answered not. And the wind whispered, and the trees bowed their heads, and from out the gathering darkness, over by the lone grave, Freck heard a sobbing, girlish voice calling: "Oh, Freck, Freck! I'm alone! I'm alone! and will you also go away and leave me?" And Freck rode into the approaching darkness with a strong inclination to look back over his shoulder.

CHAPTER XXIV.

One evening Freck was driving through Silket's Grove when he heard a voice calling: "Hey, young man! Are you afraid to trade?" "Try me, and then you will know." And in thirty minutes Freck was driving three yoke of oxen toward camp. "Boys, round up the stock in the morning." And in the morning Margaret took her seat and, Freck walking by the side of four yoke of oxen, they started off to the southward. Mile after mile they followed the winding divide between the East Nishnabotna and the Tarkio; and to the east and to the west, and to the north and to the south, as far as the eye could reach, was an extended landscape of magnificent prairie, without an inhabitant. This has developed into an empire of corn and cattle, the equal of any spot on earth; but was of no good to the early pioneer seeking a home, before the advent of railroads and wire fencing. They came to the Old Mormon Trail and turned east, crossing the Tarkio, then following the divide between the Tarkio and Nodaway until they came to the little Seceder colony near the Missouri line, called Amity, now known as College Springs. And they did not see a person nor pass a house on the way.

Freck returned to Frankford, and John and Tom (John's big brother) and Freck started afoot for Nebraska Territory. The United States surveyors had just passed along sectionizing, and on the section lines there were little mounds, a mile apart, with little stakes, and the number of the section penciled on the stake. They followed the mounds across the trackless prairie, and when they came to the Nishnabotna River, Tom and John swam across, carrying over the boots; but Freck couldn't swim, so Tom returned, grasped him by the collar, and towed him across. And this is the way boys got to the front in the early days. They crossed the wide river bottom, the grass higher than their heads, the sun shining in all his glory, and they dying of thirst; and when they reached the top of the divide, they came into the trail. There they met two sorry-looking men, ragged and travel-strained, with a cart made out of the hind gear of a wagon and a lean, footsore yoke of oxen. In the early days it was the duty of the Danites or the Avenging Angels to see that no homesick Saint got away from the New Jerusalem, or any other "stake of Zion." But these two had eluded the Avenging Angels, and had come all the way from Salt Lake alone. And they told all about the Mountain Meadow massacre; and they added: "It took two years to dodge the Angels; and if we can reach our old home, we will be good as long as we live." Coming to a cabin on the West Nishnabotna, the first and only house on the way, they staid over night. The next day they passed through Glenwood, the county seat of Mills County. Coming to Pony Creek, they rested in the shade of an oak tree by the wayside.

How wonderful are the provisions of Nature for the accommodation of man and to meet his requirements! When the waters of Noah subsided, a narrow ridge was formed (we called them "hogbacks"); and a tiny acorn nestled by the side of this "hogback." And the rain and sun said to the tiny acorn: "Send out rootlets." And the rootlets said: "We must have breath." And the sun and the rain said: "Send up after it." And the rootlets builded an air-shaft and called it "the oak." And seemingly looking forward to the time when the white man would inhabit the land, the oak stretched an arm across the "hogback." And when the pioneers pushed up into Pony Creek valley, they blazed a trail along this narrow ridge, and in time it was called "the Big Road."

There are men who are in a hurry; they can't wait for a calf to expand into an ox, nor for a colt to reach horsehood. And some of these hurry men found their way into Pony Creek valley, and horses and oxen didn't come home any more. The settlers watched, and one night four of these hurry men ran up against the muzzle of guns, and two of them didn't get away. Their hands were tied behind their backs and their legs around the horses; and when they came into the Big Road, they halted under the arm of the oak; and when the ropes were adjusted, the leader called: "Come on, boys, and fetch the horses." And they left the two hurry men side by side; but their feet didn't quite touch the ground.

Years afterwards one of those who got away returned and lived with his widowed mother, a white-haired and kind Christian old lady, from whose heart all the gladness of this life was crushed out by the misconduct of her sons. And the Devil has not been able to evolve a surer mode of crushing the gladness out of the hearts of fathers and mothers than by the misconduct of their children. And the minister met this young man (who was running a little den down town) and said: "Mr. R——, we are holding meetings, and I will be pleased to see you." "All right, parson; but business before pleasure. There are a few boys I haven't fleeced yet; but when I get through shearing, I'll come around and hear you spout." And with a leer he walked away.

Tom, John, and Freck stayed over night on Pony Creek. And the next day, from a high point of the river bluff, they for the first time beheld the wide valley of the Missouri River. The tall grass was like a mighty field of grain waving in the breeze, and miles and miles away was seen the mighty river winding its way to the far-away sea; but not an inhabitant in all the land. They followed around the horseshoe bend, and came into "the stake of Zion," Council Bluffs, with one straggling street and a clump of cabins. In time they came to the Missouri River and were ferried over, and on the fourth day of July, 1856, they, with little packs on their backs, walked into the city of Omaha. The city of Omaha consisted of one or two score of cheap board shacks, scattered over the hillside; not a street in the town. The City Hotel was an unfinished four-room house, with an ell kitchen; at night the tables and chairs were moved out and blankets spread on the floor, and a row of men, with their feet pointing to the center and their clothes on, battled with the mosquitoes, for one dollar a night and supper and breakfast. The Capitol building was a hole in the ground, with the stone walls a few feet high, and was a mile from the town. Near by, in a grove, was a big Indian camp.

One morning a steamboat, by way of the long "Whoo! Whoo-o! Whoo-o-o!" from the whistle and "Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!" from the great bell, called: "I'm going to land! I'm going to land! I'm going to land!" And John and Freck ran down to the landing and hired for deckhands, at forty dollars a month. They hastened back to the hotel for their little bundles and to tell Tom; but Tom was much the older, and Tom said: "No, boys, you don't go on no steamboat to be taken down South and work side by side with 'nigger' slaves, and die of yellow fever. No, boys, you don't." And John and Freck didn't.

The next day Tom hired the three to Seth Chase, a giant of the frontier, who with Wilson was rafting logs down the Missouri River to Omaha. The logging camp was a hundred miles by river above Omaha; but a little Government steamboat, carrying supplies to the upper forts, dropped them off in the big woods near the camp. John and Freck were put to work with the camp force, building the logs into rafts; but Tom was an oarsman, and ran on the river with Seth, who was the pilot, and four others; three men to each oar.

There was a young man—I never knew his name; we called him "Mount" because he came from Mount Pleasant; and one morning he offered to go as an oarsman.

The lines were let go, and the raft was shoved out into the channel, and in the afternoon the raft hung up on a bar; they worked all night, but the current kept the raft jammed against the bar. And in the morning Seth pulled off his boots and said: "Boys, I know where there are some settlers on the Nebraska side, and I am going to swim ashore and get a skiff and fetch some grub." And Seth plunged off and struck out diagonally for the shore a mile away. Mount watched him for a few moments, and then he plunged off to follow, but before he got a hundred yards he went under and never rose again. How often I have thought of that young man! By name unknown to his fellow-workmen, but he was some mother's boy. And I have thought: "Had it been Freck, and the mother waiting and waiting and no word from Freck."

CHAPTER XXV.

The last of the fifteen hundred logs was rolled into the river and floated around and pinned into the raft, and the long sweeps were placed on the rowlocks, and the raft was snubbed to a stump at both ends. And a supper of flapjacks, bacon, and coffee, in the logging camp in Big Nettle Bend, where the wolves would steal up and lap the gravy from the skillet within a rod of the tent where we were sleeping, was prepared for the last time. And just as the rising sun was gilding the tree-tops on the Calhoun Hills, Seth called: "Let go the lines." And the long sweeps were put in motion and the heavy raft was pushed out into the current, and we floated down past Fiddler's Elbow, Horseshoe Bend, and the Cat Heads, and through Satan's Teeth. Tying up in Eddy Bend for the night, they went a mile back from the river to a settler's cabin and had supper. Then they stretched themselves, without blankets, on the ground, and with the stars smiling down into their faces, they fell asleep and dreamed of "the girl I left behind me."

Tom, John, and Freck again, with the toes pointing the other way, rested beneath the arm of the Oak on Pony Creek. And as they rested they moralized on the way of the transgressor, and speculated whether Nature purposely provides the means, or man avails himself of the purpose-less works of Nature, to execute judgment upon the pate of the wrongdoer. And in due time they arrived at home.

Meantime the Father had selected a new location, on the Nodaway River, in the northeast corner of Page County. He had also ordered a steam saw-mill from Cincinnati, to be shipped by steamboat to Saint Joseph, Missouri. The oxen were yoked to the wagons, and again Freck and Margaret led the procession toward the new location. And a cabin was builded, and the mill was drawn from Saint Joseph, a hundred miles, and soon the buzz of the saw was heard in the Nodaway valley.

There were eight settlers in this bend, and all of them had moved in within the year. Late in the fall a prairie schooner, drawn by two yoke of oxen, and driven by a young man, "Press," pulled into the setlement; and seated among the stuff was his widowed mother and his sister Mary. And they went into camp near the Father's, and all were busy preparing for the winter, and no cabin could be built. And the Mother said: "The storms of winter will soon be here, and what are those people going to do for shelter?" "I know not," replied the Father; for his time was fully occupied with his mill and other affairs. And the Mother said: "I know what I'm going to do." "And pray what are you going to do?" Now, the Father had built a double cabin, and the Mother answered: "I'm going to move all of our things into one room, for there are but eight of us and we can get along all right until spring, and these people shall move in." And they did move in. And the events of a lifetime, for four, were hinged upon and turned upon their moving in.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was called "The Forks." At the junction of the Middle and the West rivers there was a narrow neck of land, grown over with large trees and free from underbrush, and every other Saturday afternoon, in the fall of the year, the settlers would come from far and near to The Forks to a shooting-match. Each paid his money and had so many "shoots," and with the money a beef was bought and "shot off." The beef was divided into five parts, and the best shot took first choice. The distance for offhand shooting was fifty paces, and with a rest, seventy-five paces. Each one fetched along his own target, a charred board with a bit of white paper in the center. All the guns were muzzle-loaders. The judges would place the target against the great oak and step to one side, and after each shot call: "To the right," or "To the left," or "Too high," or "Too low"; and at times, "Broke center"; and occasionally, "Drove center," when the shooter could do no better, and would shoot no more. And sometimes a pony or a gun or a watch would be "shot off"; almost anything to have a good time.

And there were pony races, backed with a couple of dollars. One afternoon a couple of young men, Jack and Bill, rode up leading a nice bay horse with ribbons braided in his mane and tail; they had just come around hoping to witness a horse-race. "No," said Bill, "I never bet on a horse-race—that is, hardly ever; but Jack does, sometimes. And Jack sometimes matches his bay against a good horse." Now, there lived up the Middle River three brothers, John, Tom, and Ed. John always walked before, and Tom and Ed followed. And they managed, when John walked before, to absorb a good many of the transitory pleasures and some money. And they also kept a brown horse, which ambled occasionally along the race-track, and generally paid a dividend. Jack and John had a few words, and John fetched his brown horse from the thicket; and Jack looked him over, and called out: "Boys, it 's all off. I won't match my horse against that old plug." Now, Bill was riding a bald-faced, ewe-necked mare with three white stockings; her mane and tail were sticking full of hay and she was covered with an old saddle-blanket. And Bill looked over the disappointed crowd and called out: "Boys, I 'd rather loose five dollars myself than to have you disappointed, and I 'll match my old bald-faced plow-mare against the brown, and we 'll have a little fun anyway." "All right," said John; "put up your money." And each handed five dollars to the stake-holder. In his loose-fitting homespun and tumble-down hat, John didn't look it, but he knew the bald-face was a racer; and he also noticed that she was fidgety and excitable. On the way to the race-track John was walking before; he spoke a few low words to Tom and Ed, and they and a few friends sauntered down the track and halted in a couple of groups. The horses came thundering down the track, and the first group shouted and threw their hats and the second did likewise. And the brown, with his nose sticking out and his belly close to the ground, passed right on for all he was worth; but the bald-face flew the track, and the brown crossed the scratch a length ahead. Jack and Bill said something, and John let them run down some, and then he said, or words to this effect: "Boys, this is very unseemly conduct. You started in to deceive and cheat; now take your pills and don't make faces; and here, wash 'em down with this." And he handed them a flask of whiskey. Jack muttered, "We are but two," and slipped the flask into a hip pocket; and they rode away, leading the bald-face, which would, had she been left alone, surely have thrown gravel into the face of the brown.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Our customary "squaw winter" did not come around this fall, but the lovely, smoky, hazy autumn days came right on until December. But at the break of day on December 2d the great snow-flakes commenced coming down so thickly that the light of the day was shut out, and they fell for thirty-six hours, until the snow lay three feet deep. And this winter was a winter of suffering and loss to the settlers on the western frontier. There were eight settlers in this bend of the river, and all had moved in during the summer. Some prairie had been broken, but nothing had been raised, and the wild prairie hay was the only feed for the stock. The settlers lost the most of their stock this winter; the horses were saved by felling young cottonwood trees, and the horses would gnaw the bark, but the cattle could not do this.

Up to this time the deer in the West were very plentiful; but when the deep snow crusted over, the sharp hoofs of the deer would cut through, and they would flounder in the snow. The wolves would scurry along over the frozen snow and fall upon them and devour them at their will. In the bends of the streams, where the deer would gather for shelter and to browse, the ground was covered with their bleaching bones. And from this time on deer were scarce in the West.

About the first of February the Father sorted out all of his cattle that were able to travel and drove them down into Missouri, a hundred miles, and had them fed until grass. But he lost about twenty cows. To the old-timers this was "the winter of the deep snow."

The northwest wind howled and shrieked, and drove the snow through the chinks and piled it in great drifts, causing much suffering and sickness. But to Margaret and Freck, and to Press and Mary what did it matter—the howling wind, the swirling snow, the swaying trees, and the wailing woods? They had entered the valley of sunshine, and were walking in the mossy path of youthful, hopeful gladness; and there was no winter in the valley of sunshine, and flowers grew in the snow-banks, and the biting northwest wind had lost his teeth, and seemed to come floating along through orange groves. And there were seven days and seven nights in the week, but the time was far too short to tell all of the old, old story. And while they were walking along the mossy paths through the valley of sunshine, and telling the old, old story, the savage old Winter died. The sweet and tender young Spring of 1857 came to his funeral and shed her tears over his grave, and covered it with a plaid of green, and scattered flowers all along in his footprints. And the great throbbing heart of the toiling world forgot all about the storms and the suffering, and was filled with gladness.

And Press and Freck drove a couple of heavy loads of lumber, each drawn by three yoke of oxen, to Clarinda, and next morning they crossed the square and walked into the ramshackle court-house, and depositing a dollar each on the counter, inquired: "Mr. Baldhead, will you exchange a couple of licenses to marry for the money in sight?" "Sure," answered Mr. Baldhead. "And you boys are minded to trot in double harness?" "Bet yer life we 're so minded." "Now, boys, listen to me: I 've been trotting in double harness for forty years. Now, don't try to jockey your running-mate, and make her fly the track; but you keep right along on your own side, and you will cross the scratch neck and neck." "Thank you," said Press. "Thank you," said Freck. And they walked out, yoked their oxen, and started to bear the glad tidings to Margaret and Mary.

When Freck paid for the license and bought a few things for himself and Mary, he was still the cheerful and hopeful possessor of a bald-face pony and a saddle, a five-dollar goldpiece and four bits in silver, and a bull's-eye silver watch, for which he had traded a fiddle, which he had bought of the big Hoosier Pete for two dollars. And on the morning of April 7, 1857, Freck buckled the saddle on the bald-faced pony and led her up to the horse-block, and Mary took her seat, and they started to go to the Harris Settlement. The Harris Settlement was away down the river, on the west side, and consisted of four cabins, and in one of these unfinished cabins lived Doctor McKesson. Doctor McKesson dealt out blue-mass and quinine to the settlers living up and down the valley; for in those early days of swampy land along the river almost all, even the babies, spent the fall months in taking blue-mass and quinine and shaking with the ague. Doctor McKesson was also a Methodist preacher, and this is why Freck and the bald-faced pony were making tracks pointing toward the Harris Settlement. They came to Reub's Ford, but because of the spring rains Reub's Ford was not available. But the Doctor was waiting with his cottonwood canoe, and so were Martha Dyke and her sister, who were going over to see the yoke put on. The bald-faced pony was tied to a limb, and then it was Freck and Mary who were making tracks pointing toward the unfinished cabin at the foot of the bluffs. Martha Dyke and her sister were amazed to witness how submissively Freck and Mary stood to be yoked. Freck and Mary were the first couple ever married in Valley Township, and they were married in a pioneer Methodist preacher's unfinished cabin, on the western frontier. And Judge C. L. McKesson, who at this writing is city attorney for the city of Colorado Springs, Colorado, a son of Doctor McKesson, who yoked Freck and Mary in his unfinished cabin, was born in this same cabin on the western frontier. Freck passed the five-dollar goldpiece to the Doctor, and received his thanks. And the Doctor's wife spoke kind words, and the Doctor set them over on their own side of the river. On their homeward journey Freck and Mary followed what novelists would call a bridle-path, but they called it a cow-path, up through the woods, and coming to Dyke's Branch, they found it bank-full from back-water; but the bald-faced pony and Mary plunged in and scrambled up the opposite bank, and Freck "cooned" it over on the drift.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Freck, take a span of horses and drive to Saint Joe and get a load of supplies." So spoke the Father. And the next morning Freck gave Mary a hug and started for provisions, a hundred miles away. After leaving the timber on the Nodaway River, there was not a house until he came to Marysville, the county seat of Nodaway County, Missouri, a town of a dozen shacks. The tavern (hotel) was an unpainted, one-story frame of four rooms, and the tavern barn was a hay shed. Freck stayed over night here, and one of his horses was sick, and the landlord gave him sweet milk and sage tea and charged Freck two dollars and a half. He was a kind of horse doctor, and he also gave Freck some recipes for curing sick horses, and Freck has them to this day, fifty-four years; but he never used any of them. On his return trip he again stayed over night at Marysville, but his horse wasn't sick.

And again the Father said: "Freck, we must have seed-corn. Return into Egypt." And Freck gave Mary another hug and started to Egypt, and again he stayed over night at Marysville. And he drove away down onto the Hundred and Two until he found corn, and he paid a dollar a bushel for it; and after eight days and a drive of more than two hundred miles, he arrived at home with corn for seed and for feed. And this is the way the old pioneers subdued the wilderness.

A. J. and Three-fingered Jack bought a steam sawmill at Keokuk, freighted it across the State with ox teams, and set it up on the West Nodaway. I will tell you more about Three-fingered Jack farther on. And they offered Freck a dollar and four bits a day to come up and run the saw for them, and a shanty to live in. So Freck and Mary moved into Montgomery County, within half a mile of Sciola post-office; but Sciola post-office might just as well have been fifty miles away, for Freck wasn't getting letters from Half-way Prairie any more. The mill was moved over onto East River, within half a mile of the French Colony, in Adams County; and after a while the mill was sold. Freck traded his bald-faced pony and saddle and a cow to an Irishman for a yoke of black oxen, and Freck called them "Limerick" and "Cork." And Freck and Mary moved back to the Father's mill, and Freck again took his stand at the saw.

You remember that Tom Hend married Louise, Aunt Anna's only daughter. Well, Tom laid Louise by the side of Mildred, in the little graveyard back of the meeting-house. And Tom had fetched their two little girls all the way out for Aunt Anna to care for, and Aunt Anna tenderly cared for them until the world was one year and one day older than it was when their mother died. And then Aunt Anna, in a little cabin away out on the Tarkio prairie, closed her eyes and her toil-weary hands were folded over her breast, and Aunt Anna was moved into her home on the western frontier, where she will repose until Jesus comes and unlocks the door.

The Father and Tom bought a steam saw-mill and moved it to Walden's Grove, in Missouri. And the Father said: "Freck, you and Mary will have to move to Walden's Grove and take charge of my half of the mill, and I will pay you a dollar and four bits a day." Squaw Winter came down in a rage, and scattered the snow and the sleet in blinding sheets all over the land. And the cattle stood with bowed heads, in dismal groups, in the shelter of the trees; and the trees, in angry tones, muttered and swayed and shook their fists in the face of Squaw Winter; but the wind screamed with delight, and grasped the trees and shook them until the icicles rattled from their heads, and passed right on. On the gloomy morning of November 12, 1857, with two yoke of oxen, the earth covered with a foot of snow, and a riotous cold wind driving the sullen storm-clouds and swirling the snow in sheets, Freck and Mary pulled out for Walden's Grove. As they drove through the tall timber toward the Lovelace Ford the trees swayed and moaned, and in a dreary voice seemed to say: "Ah, Freck! Freck! you are going to freeze Mary to death." The river was full of snow and ice, and midside to the oxen. And all day long the oxen trailed their feet through the trackless snow; Freck trudged along by their side, and Mary sat shivering among the stuff. The dreary, cold, raw, melancholy day was drawing to a close, with no human habitation in sight, and a feeling of apprehension was stealing over them; but a horseman rode up, and Freck made inquiry. "No, there is not a house on the road for twenty-five miles. But two miles farther on you will come to a field; follow around the fence and you will come to my house, and you shall stay over night with me." And the next morning not a cent would they take.

Freck and Mary continued on their journey toward Walden's Grove, twenty-five miles and not a house between. And toward evening Freck bade his oxen: "Turn your faces to the west." The wind was in an ugly temper, and sent blocks of crust sizzling over the frozen snow, and the slowly revolving wheels chanted a dirge in harmony with the dismal scene. They started to follow a narrow "hogback" down onto the Big Tarkio, and the hind wheels slipped off the narrow ice-covered ridge and slewed around and jammed the box against the front wheels with such force that the tongue was broken off at the point of the hounds. Now, here they were, away out on the wind-swept prairie, the sun going down, ten miles from a house, and no tongue to guide or hold back going down the hills. Mary looked at the broken tongue and asked: "Now, Robert, what will we do?" And Freck pulled a chain around the axletree near the hubs, hitched the draw-chain into the center link, rough-locked both hind wheels, and drove down onto the bank. To rough-lock, a chain is wound around the rim of the wheel so that the wheel will ride on the chain and plow into the ground. The channel was spanned by a narrow corduroy bridge (round logs) and the banks were steep. Now, how could he prevent the wagon rushing down and over the oxen and plunging into the creek? Freck drove his leaders over, wound the chain around the coupling-pole, and brought it over the front axletree and rough-locked the front wheels also. Then Freck patted his oxen on the cheek and said: "Limerick and Cork, you are probably going to your death, but die good and doing your duty."

Freck loved a good and true ox, and he still has a reminiscent kindness for the pioneer's most faithful servant. Without the ox the frontier would have advanced but slowly. And the joys and the sorrows, the pleasures and the privations, the hardships, the log-cabin home, and the oxen are all tangled up in his memory and make the warp and the woof woven into the web of his life on the western frontier.

The chains gripped the ground, and the crossing was made in safety. The darkness had closed down, but the moon rose and sent her cold light over the frozen snow;

from down in a dark hollow came the lonely cry of a wolf, and soon answering howls were heard from far and near; the slowly revolving wheels from the frozen snow squeezed out a doleful dirge. And Mary and Freck and the oxen crept nearer and nearer to Walden's Grove. Long after the hour of midnight they halted before Mr. Freeman's gate, and bedding was carried in and spread before the fire, and soon they were sleeping the dinnerless and supperless sleep of the weary and worn pioneer.

LIMERICK AND CORK

Freck traded his oxen for land, and soon they were keeping house in a one-room cabin in Walden's Grove, Missouri. And Press and Margaret moved into the one-room cabin along with Freck and Mary and Mary's mother, and they were a happy lot, and are still living in the valley of sunshine. The Father sold his interest in the mill, and Press and Freck got together a lot of unbroken steers for the purpose of breaking prairie.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Bill Daniels moved from North Carolina, fetching along his wife and two babies, in a one-horse wagon, drawn by a blind mare. And Bill squatted on "Congress land" and built a cabin; he traded the blind mare for a yoke of steers, and plowed a few acres. Bill was living away out on the frontier, where the United States mail never came; but in some way Bill caught the "California gold fever," and being offered his grub for driving an ox team, he left his wife and the babies and the steers, and started off on the long and (then) dangerous journey to the California "gold-diggings." And his wife spent her time contending with the steers, and sitting on the plow-beam and crying, and caring for the babies; but she raised corn enough to feed the steers, herself, and the babies. Three winters had chased three summers down through Walden's Grove, and no word from Bill; for Bill was from "No'th Car'lina" and could neither read nor write; and there was no United States mail anyway. One day Bill's wife heard a noise, and looking up, there stood Bill in the door. And she cried: "Why, you old Bill!" And she fell on his neck and wept. And now Bill owned a half-section, and was a "Forty-niner," and lived in a hewed-log house; but he was still Bill Daniels.

April 6, 1858, in a one-room cabin in Walden's Grove, there was born to Mary and Freck a lovely little blue-eyed baby girl; and they called her Rose.

Press and Freck moved back into Page County, and Freck traded for a farm in Ross Grove, in Montgomery County, and the next spring Freck traded the farm for a mare, a cow, and a mule. Press and Freck and Mary and Margaret moved down into the valley, and into the same cabin; for they were still living in the valley of sunshine. The Father sold and moved into the Territory of Nebraska. Press and Freck traded for a threshing-machine, and they threshed the grain that grew on the land where now stands the city of Villisca.

We were cut off from the world—no railroads, no telegraph, no mail. Everyone did that which was right in his own eyes, and didn't go far wrong. Even the old-time pioneer colporteur, who tramped from settlement to settle-

Ross.

ment and from cabin door to cabin door with a pack of Bibles and tracts on his back (and when a settler was unable or unwilling to buy, he would give him a Bible and some tracts, and tramp on along the path, feeding the sheep and the lambs), had not found us. And the old-time pioneer Methodist preacher, with his Bible and hymn-book in his saddle-bags, following the covered wagons into the wilderness, had lost the trail that led down into this bend of the river. But this fall (1859) several new-comers moved in and built cabins.

Preacher Smith lived in Bedford, in Taylor County; and he started to Quincy, in Adams County, to hold meetings. Riding along the trail on the divide between the East and West Nodaway, and coming to The Forks, he knew not which path to take; so, in conformity with the custom of the time, he spit on a chip and threw it up, saying: "Dry, turn to the left." And dry came up, and he turned to the left, and of course it was the wrong road; but in the end it turned out all right, for it led him down to our settlement. He stayed over night with Father Chase, a good old Baptist, and Preacher Smith left an appointment for Sunday two weeks. A place in Father Chase's grove was cleared, and logs rolled and puncheons split and placed across for seats, and a pole platform built for the preacher's stand. Preacher Smith was an old-time pioneer preacher, and he was on the ground at the appointed hour. Preacher Smith, like most all of the old-time pioneer preachers, was a good talker and a powerful exhorter. And it is just possible that Preacher Smith had been a sinner or a backslider; at any rate, he seemd to know just what the sinner and the backslider needed. And Preacher Smith would tell them what to do, and to do it now. And when he had told them, he would start around, shaking hands with everyone, and singing (and Preacher Smith could sing):

"Oh, who will come and go with me,
Oh, who will come and go with me,
Oh, who will come and go with me
To the New Jerusalem,
Where congregations ne'er break up
And the Sabbaths never end?"

And when Preacher Smith turned toward the mourners' bench singing, "Oh, who will come and go with me?" it just seemed like somebody had to go with him, and a good many went. Preacher Smith would stay for days, and the people would quit their work and come for miles and stay for days.

This was the beginning of Freck's experience in old-time revival meetings, and he heard and saw much that was new, strange, and perplexing to him; such a thing as shouting or falling in a swoon he had never witnessed before. And Freck was troubled and confused, and at times indignant, at the unnecessary noise.

CHAPTER XXX.

I never knew a Seceder nor a Presbyterian, man, woman, or child ten years old, who could not read; but I have, in those early days, known many Methodists and United Brethren who knew not one letter from the other. And I have known a number of preachers who couldn't read; and they could, and would, argue theology to beat the band; and at family worship they would stand and sing a familiar hymn. And nearly all those old-time, unlearned men and women could point to "the hallowed spot, the sacred hour, where Love Divine first found me, and the burden from my heart rolled away." I never knew a Seceder nor a Presbyterian that could do this; but they could say, and did say: "I know that my Redeemer liveth. And it is by grace that I am saved, and it is the gift of God." For many generations the training and the environment had been radically different. The Seceders and the Presbyterians were of Scotch ancestry, and the unemotional was a characteristic of the race, and they did not approve of the sensational in matters of religion. The Seceders and the Presbyterians were believers in infant baptism, and always had their babies baptized, and the parents covenanted to teach these children to read the Holy Scriptures, and to instruct them therein, and these people were covenant-keepers. But, on the other hand, most of the Methodist converts were from the South and Southwest, where the children grew up on the range, as it were, and their reverence for God and godly things was not very pronounced, and the free school was not in favor. And being of an emotional nature, when the convicting power got hold of them (I am using the old-time expressions), they would come, strong men and women, to the mourners' bench and cry for mercy; and when they found the blessing, they would shout: "Glory to God! I'm saved! I'm saved!" And there would be much rejoicing over a sinner that had repented, and many tears, and shaking of hands, and hysterical laughing and crying. Freck felt in his heart that there was much unnecessary noise and confusion; and in all the years that have come and gone Freck's heart has not changed in regard to the noise and the confusion.

"Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door," this is Freck's hour of communion with the Master.

The evening service always began at "candle-lighting." There were no lamps, but each family fetched a tallow dip, and blocks with auger-holes were stuck in the wall, and each one coming in would light his candle and place it in the block. The light was not at all times bright, but the hymns were sung from memory and the preacher had his text by heart. At times the meeting would be carried on till past midnight, and the candles would be burned out. Under these conditions, how many would go to meeting to-day?

Many of these converts, having no depth of soil in themselves, when the sun of old habits and old associates rose with a scorching heat, withered away and brought no fruit to perfection; and others, trusting in the grace of God, and standing firmly on their manhood and womanhood, brought forth forty, sixty, and an hundred fold.

There was a camp-meeting in Snyder's Grove. Let me see, how long ago was it? Oh, I don't like to count the years, for they number more than fifty; but it seems to me but yesterday. Dear Lord, "our latest sun is sinking fast; we brush the dews on Jordan's banks; the crossing must be near." Did you ever hear an old-time Methodist camp-meeting preacher sing? You never did? Well, I am sorry. I would like to tell you about it, but I can't. It would take an angel's pen to tell you. In the dear old days of the long, long ago, pole platforms were builded and covered with dirt, and on these fires were kept burning to light the camp-ground; and the fires were brightly burning, lighting the middle, and hanging a curtain of black darkness all around. And there was murmuring of voices. The preacher climbed onto the pole platform, and there was silence. And the preacher began to sing about the day of judgment, and all eyes were turned upon the preacher. The preacher was an old man, with a bushy white head, and on the frontier of the Southwest and the West he had been fighting the Devil for fifty years. And he was all battered and dinged, for the Devil had handled him mighty roughly at times; but he was still putting up a good fight and hitting the Devil in the face.

You know that they used to hang, and shoot, and tar and feather Methodist preachers in the Southwest. Oh, yes; they surely did. They shot Father Holland to death, seventy years old; and they tarred and feathered Preacher Sellers; and they hanged Presiding Elder Bewley. The old-time Methodist preacher would tell bad people that they were going along on the broad road straight to Hell, and that they had better turn back before they went around the next bend; and then he would tell them of some of the wicked things they were doing. And they would be enraged, and howl, "Abolitionist! Abolitionist!" which, being interpreted, was "Crucify him! Crucify him!" And the "pore white trash," who couldn't have bought a "nigger" baby had it been born blind, and to whom all whiskey tasted alike, were ever ready to handle the rope and tote the tar-bucket. It was Methodist preachers they shot, tarred and feathered, and hanged.

While Paul held the garments of those that stoned Stephen, Paul was all right; but when Paul preached "Christ, and Him crucified, Whom ye crucified," Paul's blood was required. And the rabble will furnish the blood, if the price is put up. And Joseph took Christ down from the cross, and wrapped Him in fine linen, and buried Him in a rock-hewn tomb. And two Negro slaves cut Christ's faithful servant, Presiding Elder Bewley, down from the limb, and without shroud or coffin, covered him up in a hole in the ground.

CHAPTER XXXI

This fall Brother Van moved in from Illinois. Brother Van was a local Methodist preacher, and a friendship between Brother Van and Frank and Sister Van and Mary endured for a lifetime. And when the storms of winter prevented Preacher Smith from following the trails across the prairies, Brother Van took up the work. In those days the preachers labored with their hands, just like we did. It never entered the heart of man to pay the preacher a salary. If the preacher, while walking between the plow-handles, thought of something that he would like to say on Sunday, we all turned out and went and heard him. Wasn't that enough? Brother Van's and Brother Smith's manner of preaching was all right at the time and on the frontier, but the people of to-day would not sit on the backless benches and endure the infliction of an hour-long sermon. No, no; a half-hour is enough to fritter away in the service of God. And then for a spin on the wheel. Brother Van and his yoke-fellows plowed and planted the fields, and battled with unruly oxen, and made terms with balky horses, and contended with the Devil six days in the week, and preached twice on Sunday.

Peter and Freck were friends, and they sat side by side on the puncheon bench at meeting. Sister Miriam, Peter's wife, was reared a Quaker, but she was converted in her girlhood and joined the Methodists; nevertheless, the meek and quiet Quaker sweetness clung to her. But at times Sister Miriam would get real happy in meeting, and shout; and at times while praying her voice could not be heard, but her lips would move. Sister Miriam helped many to turn to the Lord, but she wisely refrained from saying anything to Peter and Freck. One of Sister Miriam's favorite hymns was:

"Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and power.

"Come, ye weary, heavy-laden,
Bruised and mangled by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all."

And another was:

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood."

And Sister Miriam, forgetful of self, would sing in such a tender and pathetic way that the tears would unbidden start.

One night when the invitation was given to come to the mourners' bench, and the congregation arose and began singing, "I will arise and go to Jesus, He will embrace me in His arms," Peter started forward; and Freck took one step to follow, but he heard a voice in his heart, as plainly as he ever heard a voice in his ears, saying: "Stop; you are young; there is no need to hurry." And Freck stopped, believing that he was obeying the voice of God. And Peter long time wept and prayed, and many prayed for him. And Peter arose and cried: "Glory to God! I'm saved! I'm saved!" And Sister Miriam threw her arms around Peter's neck and shouted: "Glory to God! my prayers are answered." And there was much joy and praising God.

But these scenes will never again be enacted in this world; no, never. The people have outgrown all this. It is quite enough now to raise the right hand. And the mourners' bench has been carried out into the wood-shed. But there is a day coming when there will be weeping and mourning; but there will be no mourners' bench, nor mercy-seat. Probation will be ended, and the judgment will be set, and the books shall be opened.

In seeing and hearing these things Freck was brought under conviction; and his soul was sick and perplexed, and a millstone was upon his heart. And the Devil turned on him and whispered over and over again: "It's too late. It's too late. You should have gone forward when Peter did." Of all men, Freck was the most miserable, but he kept it all locked in his own heart. He quit going to meeting, and he diligently avoided meeting Brother Van or Peter or Sister Miriam. But one Sunday morning Freck walked up to the Dyke School-house, two and a half miles away, and timed himself to arrive while they were singing the first hymn. And when the benediction was pronounced, he slipped out of the door and started for home, not waiting for the customary greeting and hand-shaking; for Freck had a dread of meeting Brother Van and Peter and Sister Miriam, as he felt in his heart that Sister Miriam had not ceased praying when Peter was converted, but was patiently waiting for her prayers to be answered. There was a miry place on the bottom road, and when the ground was not frozen, teams had to elbow around over the hill; but Freck pushed straight ahead into the tall grass, believing the frost had gone out, and feeling safe, he slackened his pace.

For a long time Freck had been trying to solve this problem. He had grown to manhood in a godly home, where grace was said at every meal and prayers were offered morning and evening; and he had not taken the name of God in vain, neither had he committed a lewd nor an immoral act, but had lived a clean and (as he thought) pious life. Few nights of his life had he closed his eyes until he had said the little prayer the Mother had taught him while yet a baby. Now, why was he burdened with a feeling of condemnation, as if he had been a great sinner? Freck now understands that it was because of a false conception of God; the same feeling that caused Adam to hide among the bushes in the Garden of Eden, and cry: "I was afraid, and I hid myself." And Freck was afraid; for the Devil kept right on saying: "Freck, God is seeking for you to take vengeance on you." And Freck, like Adam, tried to hide himself. But God followed along the paths of Eden, seeking and calling: "Adam, where art thou?" And God was glad when He found Adam; for God and the angels are always glad when a poor sinner is found, for God is trying to reconcile the world to Himself. For God so loved the world that He spared not His only begotten Son, but gave Him up to die; that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. By persuading and by offering rewards, God is doing all that He can to bring men and women into oneness with Himself. And Adam, when found, was naked; and with His own tender hands God made coats of skins and clothed them. And Freck, when found, was naked; and God in love and mercy clothed him with a robe of Christ's righteousness. Dear reader, is God following after and calling you? Don't be afraid, no, no, don't be afraid. God is not seeking you to take vengeance on you, but that He may clothe you with a garment of Christ's righteousness. Christ prepared the robe when He tasted death for every man and died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.

And suddenly the rattle of a wagon smote on Freck's ears, and looking around, there was Brother Van and Sister Van close upon him. And the first impulse was to run like a frightened deer; but Brother Van called, and Freck sat down on the board by his side. And when they drove in front of the cabin, Brother and Sister Van insisted that he stay for dinner; and although it was less than half a mile to his own home, Freck stayed. And he felt in his heart that it was a ruse to get a chance to talk religion to him. And after dinner Brother Van and Freck sat on the rail fence in front of the door and talked; Brother Van trying to lead up to religious lines, and Freck warding him off. At last Brother Van laid his hand on Freck's shoulder, saying: "Brother Robert, I must talk to you, but I don't know how to begin. No man can tell another how to get religion; but I have gone over the same road that you are going over, and I have met the same things that you are meeting. The Devil is telling you, as he told me, that it is too late." And he brought his hand down on Freck's shoulder, saying: "Brother Robert, the Devil is a liar; don't believe him; it is not too late. Never give up until you get the blessing." And with the tears running down his weather-tanned cheeks, Brother Van, like Paul before Felix, reasoned of righteousness and judgment. And when Freck started for home, the fear of meeting Brother Van was gone, because Brother Van had been over the road and knew all about it.

It was a little log barn, with rails leaned on three sides, and straw piled, to make a shed for the calves and the sheep; and it was always dark in there. And morning after morning, after feeding the stock, Freck would go back into the darkest corner and kneel down and try to pray; but the heavens were brass, and the words refused to be spoken, and there seemed to be no ear to hear, and his soul reached out and grasped an empty void. But one morning while he was kneeling in this dark shed the great millstone which had lain on his heart so long slipped away, and his heart felt light and glad. Freck was startled, and coming out, he faced the east. The rim of the rising sun was just showing above the distant river hills, and oh, such a glorious sunrise! such a bright and glowing sky! It was a new heaven and a new earth that he saw. All things seemed to be made new. And his soul shouted: "Glory to God!" But his Seceder training asserted itself, and his voice was silent. And Freck rested his arms on the top bar and gazed in wonder, and the fountain of tears, so long dry, was broken up and overflowed. And perfect peace filled his soul. That little log barn, and the little log cabin near by, the smoke in the early morning curling from the stick chimney, that rude and humble house on the western frontier, and the glorious sunrise, "where the burden from my heart rolled away," were indelibly pictured on

Freck's heart. And the tears of sorrow for more than fifty years have flowed over this picture; but it fadeth not, but grows brighter and more sacred as the years go by. And may it be God's pleasure to permit me to carry this picture with me across the Jordan of the resurrection and through the years of eternity.

No doubt to the present generation all this will appear as did the handwriting on the wall to Nebuchadnezzar. But there may be a few old-time Methodists and United Brethren left, to whom these lines will recall the long ago, the log school-house, the tears and the cries for mercy, the shouts of victory, and the songs of praise. And at the remembrance the tears will trickle down the old furrowed cheeks, and in a reminiscent mood they will think of the days that are gone and the friends that are gone, and will hear a voice saying: "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

And Peter and Freck were baptised in infancy, but they were not satisfied; so a letter was written, and a preacher came on horseback across the prairies, through the woods, fording the streams, for fifty miles, to bury Peter and Freck in the Nodaway River, because Brother Van had not been ordained. And Peter has been dead for forty years. Shall we, Peter and Freck, know each other there?

CHAPTER XXXII.

Press and Margaret and Freck and Mary were still living in the valley of sunshine and in the same cabin. On the fourth day of May, 1860, Freck and Brother Van were planting corn; and Freck laid down his hoe and left the field. And there was born to Mary and Freck a little baby girl; and Sister Van said: "She is a lovely baby; call her for me." So they called her Allice. And here is the baby, nineteen years thereafter.

And that kind Christian woman, Sister Van, has been sleeping the sleep of death for twenty-five years, and Brother Van for twenty years.

And Press and Margaret piled their stuff into the wagon and pulled out for Nebraska Territory, leaving a lonely void in the cabin of Freck and Mary. And about the tenth of August, 1860, Freck sold out, and going be-

Alice.

fore with two yoke of oxen, and Mary following with a span of horses, they pulled out for Nebraska Territory. They crossed the river at Reub's Ford, and drove past the unfinished cabin where they were yoked; but the preacher was gone, and the grass was growing tall in the lone, forsaken door of the pioneer preacher's cabin on the western frontier. When they reached the divide, they turned north and drove all day along the same trackless prairie over which the Father's train passed to the South four years before. At night they pulled down onto the Tarkio for water, and camped opposite Dinwiddy's Grove. And Freck pointed out to Mary the cabin, still deserted and lonely, and the tree under which the girl wife (who had forsaken her father and her mother and had come with her husband to build for themselves a home on the western frontier) was sleeping, far from human habitation, with only the wind and the wolves to sing her requiem.

The next morning they turned to the west, across the trackless prairie, a clump of timber on the Walnut Creek hills beyond the Nishnabotna River for a beacon. Near where the city of Shenandoah now stands, one of Freck's oxen fell dead from sunstroke; and leading the remaining ox, they made haste to reach water. And they went into camp on the Nishnabotna River. Next morning Freck rode along the river seeking a ford. He drove his oxen into the river, and Mary followed, and the horses became restive and shied to pass the oxen, and the off horse suddenly dropped out of sight except his head; and the water flowed into the wagon, and Mary had the babies, and the wagon was ready to turn bottom side up; but the other horse lunged and dragged his mate and the wagon from the deep water. When they reached the shore, there were a couple of white faces; and Mary cried, but the babies kicked and cooed. Starting across the hills on Walnut Creek, the way was cut off by a deep gulch; but there was no turning back, so the wagons were taken apart and let down, and with long chains dragged up the opposite bank.

Now, don't think for a moment that Mary stood idly by. Mary was not large: height, five feet seven inches; usual weight, one hundred and fifteen pounds. But Mary was a God-given helpmeet. A quilt was spread on the grass and the babies placed thereon; and when again ready to go forward, the blood was ready to burst from Mary's face, the babies were sun-blistered, and Freck was badly wilted, and the sun was looking back over his shoulder. That night they camped under a great spreading elm on the bank of the West Nishnabotna River. And they had not passed a house nor seen a person since leaving their home, three days and three nights before. Do you think that Mary and Freck were sad and lonely on this trip, especially after losing their ox? They were not; they were full of gladness; for they had each other and the babies, and this to them was about all there was worth having. And this is only one incident of the way the old pioneers got to the front and trespassed upon and subdued the wilderness.

In time they reached the Missouri River and were ferried across. And again Press and Margaret and Freck and Mary moved into the same cabin; for they were still living in the valley of sunshine. Freck traded all of his worldy possessions for a one-third interest in a steam grist-mill.

This fall (1860) the waves on the political lake were running high and sloshing against the cabins on the very edge of the western frontier. Men and women would ride and drive twenty-five miles to hear the fiery speeches and joint debates on "Slavery and Anti-slavery," "Free Soil and Slave Territory." There was an untamable Democrat, J. Sterling Morton, of Nebraska City, around whom the Democratic hosts on the frontier loved to rally; for J. Sterling Morton was hard to down. But the Republican shepherd lad, who was still wearing knee pants, had some giant fire-crackers, and few slept in meeting.

There was a camp-meeting in Carroll's Grove, and the great pioneer Methodist preacher, Chivington, who became a soldier, a colonel, and an Indian fighter, was the principal preacher, and he preached as he afterwards fought, with all his might.

I will tell you more about Three-fingered Jack. In the early days on the western frontier there was a band of rough whiskey-drinkers who called themselves "Squatters' Rights"; they claimed choice pieces of land and extorted money from actual settlers. An elderly man and his son settled and built a cabin; and a delegation of Squatters rode around and said: "Pay us money or get off the land." And the old gentleman replied: "I will neither pay you money nor get off the land." And they swore a great oath that he would get off the land. The Squatters met and drank whiskey and drew lots, and Three-fingered Jack, Bob, Conn, and another that I never knew drew the winning cards. They rode away, and when near the cabin, they tied their horses in the brush and sneaked up to the cabin door, and one knocked. A voice demanded: "Who's there?" "I'm a stranger. I'm lost in the woods. I've had nothing to eat since morning. Can't you give me something to eat?" "Yes, of course we will." And the door was unbarred, and the four rushed in and overpowered the old man and his son. The Squatters bound them and led them to the bank of the Missouri River, where they had a skiff hid in the willows. The old man begged them to let the son return to his mother, but with profanity they refused. They carried them bound into the skiff, and rowed out into the middle of the river and cast them overboard, and the waters closed over father and son forever. And when in their cups, they boasted. Low mutterings ran along the border, and the band became alarmed and fled. Freck worked for Three-fingered Jack and A. J., and shortly after Jack sold to A. J., he twisted a boy's nose until the blood spurted, because he didn't yoke the oxen to his liking; and the boy hit Three-fingered Jack on the head with an ox-bow and killed him. And the neighbors said: "That boy did a mighty good job."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

In time Bob and Conn returned, and Bob married a quiet, nice-appearing, red-headed woman; and Bob and his wife attended the camp-meeting in Carroll's Grove. Bob and Freck lived neighbors. Bob was tall and slim, and his hair was very black, and he had a stiff neck and carried his head on one side. One morning there was an experience-meeting or "love-feast," as it was called in the long ago, and Bob arose, and those near by drew in their breath. But they breathed easily again when Bob said: "No doubt you are surprised to see me here this morning for you all know me. And you know that when there was whiskey to be drank, Bob didn't shirk; and when there was a rough-and-tumble fight, Bob was never seen with his back toward the place where was the most noise. And you know that Bob and the Devil have been mighty good friends, and the Devil showed his confidence in me by making me his bell-wether; and I have rattled his bell in Plattsmouth, and in Rock Bluff, and in Nebraska City, and all along the border. But I took off the Devil's bell last night and I threw it away, and, God helping me, I am going to fight the Devil while I live." And Bob lived a quiet life and made good for several years.

A school-house was built and a teacher hired, and the teacher boarded with Bob. One morning Bob drove the teacher off the place, and said: "If you ever cross my threshold again, I will kill you." A few days thereafter Bob drove to Plattsmouth, and while he was tying his horses to the rack, the teacher rode up, and although there was lots of room, the teacher jammed his horse against Bob. Bob snatched his buggy whip and belabored the teacher over the head and shoulders. The teacher retreated a few steps, drew a pistol, and sent a bullet crashing into Bob's breast. The teacher was acquitted—he acted in self-defense; but everybody knew that it was his purpose to kill Bob. The teacher left the country, and I know not what became of Bob's wife; neither do I know whether Bob had cause, or was insanely jealous without cause. For many good men and women are at times insanely jealous without cause, and fill their cup and the cups of others with the dregs of the bitter wine distilled by the Devil in the dismal chambers of Hell.

Do you believe in the old doctrine of "retributive justice"? That if I commit a crime and escape punishment, justice will be meted out to my children? Three-fingered Jack and Bob met violent deaths, but Conn did not. And after a good many years had come and gone, Reub's boy Zeke married Evangeline, Conn's eldest girl. And Reub, Zeke's father, liked the way Zeke did things; for Zeke, like his father, was a square-dealer and a money-maker; and Reub helped Zeke make money. Reub had nine other sons, and as fast as they got big enough to push a chair, Reub helped them to make money. Zeke had gotten together a lot of cattle, sheep, and horses, and two babies; and Zeke worked almost day and night with his cattle and horses. Zeke liked his babies real well, but they were asleep when he came in at night and asleep when he went out in the morning, and he didn't see them much; and Zeke thought a whole lot of Evangeline, but he didn't have much time to tell her about it. Say, young husband, you had better take time to tell her about it.

A young doctor located in the settlement, and for a compensation Zeke gave him a home. And the Doctor drove a fast horse to a new buggy, and didn't wear homespun; but he wore a nice smile. And he took Evangeline along sometimes for a drive; and he had more time than Zeke, and talked more. And the neighbors talked some, but Zeke was busy with his cattle and didn't hear it. One night Zeke was taken sick, and the Doctor tried hard to save his life—no doctor could have done more; but Zeke died before morning. And a few months thereafter the

Doctor and Evangeline were married. The Doctor took over the management of the farm, and in a short time the lowing of the cattle, the neighing of the horses, and the bleating of the sheep, which Zeke loved so well, were not heard in the yards any more. And one night Evangeline fell sick, and before the pale light of the stars had faded from before the bright morning light of the sun Evangeline was dead. And the Doctor, with a good many thousand dollars, fled to Texas and was heard of no more.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

In the spring of 1861 Freck traded his grist-mill for a half-section of land in Nebraska, and then he traded half the land for a half interest in a steam saw-mill, located in the big cottonwood timber which at that time extended along the Missouri River for a hundred miles on the Iowa side; and Freck sold half of his interest in the saw-mill to Press. And Press and Margaret and Freck and Mary stepped aboard the ferry and were landed on the Iowa side. Their cabins were right close together. And Will came along and made his home with Mary and Freck; and the nearest neighbor was two miles away. They were a free and happy lot, and are still living in the valley of sunshine. Press and Freck rented the other half of the mill, and Press and Will chopped the logs, and the oxen and Freck hauled them to the mill. Then they would fire up and saw the logs and give one-fourth of the lumber to R. B. Townsend, who lived in Glenwood, the owner of the timber. The settlers came for fifty miles and more, with flour and meat, cows, steers, horses, and colts, to trade for lumber. And in time Freck knew almost every man living in Mills County, and many elsewhere; for people lived only in and along the timber.

In the fall an oldish man and wife and their two sons and two sons-in-law, with a lot of oxen, on their way to Nebraska, pulled into the timber to winter. They went to work in the woods, and on the second day the sons-in-law lodged a tree, and they began chopping, and the lodged tree broke loose and fell, crushing one to death; and they buried him in the woods. The girl wife sat by the side of her mother's shanty door, and sobbed and sobbed, and mopped her face with her apron, and wandered alone through the woods, and sat in gloom by the new-made grave. Oh, how my heart did ache for the poor thing!

But the work went right on. And without halting, the days and the weeks rode past on the trot, and as they passed they handed us great big thick slices cut from the loaf of toil and hardship, leavened with hope and the purpose of young manhood; and the slices were spread on both sides with peaceful contentment and the wild honey of love, in our cabin homes in the dark shady woods on the western frontier.

There was a double wedding at the Father's house, in Rock Bluffs, Nebraska Territory, and Elizabeth and Belle (the wee curly-headed baby girl that the Mother carried in her arms from the deck of the *Red Wing* into the dark forest on the western bank of the Mississippi River) were married. Elizabeth married Doctor John, and Doctor John carried her back to his Eastern home; Belle married Steve, and they remained in the West.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The ice broke in the Missouri River and gorged, and the water flowed from bluff to bluff, in places ten miles wide, and right through the cabin windows. Press and Margaret and Freck and Mary, with their babies, pushed a skiff out into the ice-gorged channel of the mile-wide river and worked their way through the ice-flow; and many times the skiff was caught between the great floating blocks and crushed until the water gushed in, but with much baling it was kept afloat until, many miles below, they reached the shore. And two days thereafter, in the Father's house in Rock Bluffs, Nebraska Territory, on the 26th day of April, 1862, there was born to Freck and Mary a son; and they called him Will.

There came a call for volunteers to go to the front, to be shot and mangled and torn limb from limb, and die in camps and in swamps and in battles and in prisons, that these United States of America might go down to generations yet unborn one great and glorious and undivided country, and that the star-spangled banner might wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave. Freck and Will had come to the parting of the ways. Jim and Will marched away in Company B, Twenty-ninth Iowa Volunteer Infantry; Press and Eck marched away to fill the ranks of the Fourth Iowa Battery; and Steve galloped away in a Nebraska regiment of cavalry. The Father, the Mother, Belle, Margaret, and Mary entreated Freck not to go to the war and leave them alone. The Father, the Mother, and Belle moved into the dark shady woods near Freck and Mary and Margaret.

And now began the long, anxious, heart-weary waiting for news from the war. There was no railroad, no telegraph, and only a weekly mail, and the post-office twelve miles away; so when a letter was received from the battlefields, the camp, or the march, it would go around the settlement; and when men living far away came to the mill, a soldier's letter would be fetched along, and the mill would be shut down while the letter was read. By a common anxiety and a common sorrow the hearts of the loyal people were closely drawn, and they met as brothers; and the line between the loyal and the disloyal was sharply drawn. The disloyal were called "Copperheads," and when the Union arms met with defeat, their fangs were visible.

To add to our danger and apprehension, the woods would fill up with Indians in the winter, and they were threatening and annoying. They would steal up and pull the latch-string and crowd the women and children from the fire, and go out only when given bread or meat. But in the summer they would go out into the buffalo country.

A company of Home Guards was organized and mustered in, and armed by the State; they drilled Saturdays. The woods were filling up with refugees driven out of the Southwest by both the Blue and the Gray—house-burners, robbers, murderers, and bushwhackers. And they and our own "Copperheads" would mingle, and as we drilled they would make ugly and sarcastic remarks; for we were not an attractive company of soldiers, clad in our home-made garments, and made up of the odds and ends—old men and boys, and a few sick and maimed soldiers sent home from the front. At times we would become exasperated and round up a bunch of them and march them to the marshal and make them take the oath of allegiance; and this would drive them mad. They galloped through the woods yelling and firing their revolvers, and they kept us in a state of terror.

Down in Plum Hollow there lived an old man and his wife alone, and they sold a part of their farm for a thousand dollars (there were no banks in those days). One morning a neighbor missed the smoke from the chimney, and went over; there in the cabin lay the old man and his wife with their heads split open, and a bloody axe. They were buried; and the next day some men and boys rode around among the refugee camps and quietly said: "Give up those murderers, or you will all be wiped off the face of the earth; and do it quick." And without firing of guns or noise or confusion, the boys and the men rode away; and they left those murderers to be buried by their friends, and to keep the ropes for souvenirs. The refugees shot and killed Felix Van Eaton, a returned soldier and marshal; but the perpetrators fled south and escaped. And some buildings were burned on Silver Creek, and the Home Guards were ordered out; but the settlements were so far apart they easily kept in hiding.

One day Freck went out to a cross-roads, where there was a little store and saloon. Freck went for the purpose of meeting a man who was to pay him five hundred dollars; and while the man was counting the money, three refugees came from the saloon into the store, and they urged Freck to go and have a drink with them; but Freck never drank; two returned to the saloon, but one sat down by the door. Half a mile from the store there was a bayou, which was crossed on a ferry, a little flatboat. Freck waited and watched a long time, and at last all three were in the saloon; then Freck slipped past and made haste down to the ferry. When half way over, one of them, who was called by his mates "Bill the Woman-killer," came racing and shouting to the ferryman: "Come back for me." But the ferryman said: "I will set you over and go back for Bill." It was a mile through the thick woods to his home, but Freck knew what was in store for him should "Bill the Woman-killer" overtake him. Five minutes after Freck sank down exhausted on the doorstep, Bill came out of the thick woods into the little clearing and passed on to his den in the willows. And at midnight a voice in front of the door called: "Hello! Hello!" But all was still in the house. Then the tramping of feet was heard, and again:

"Hello! Hello!" But the silence in the house was unbroken, except by the throbbing of Freck's and Mary's hearts. For three successive nights this was repeated; but the door was not opened, nor answer made, and they feared to attack the door. But had Freck opened the door, that moment his breast would have been filled with buckshot. And the nearest neighbor was a mile away.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Down in the South-land there were marching and battles, and there were victories and defeats; and thousands lay dead, torn, and mangled; and the land was drenched with blood and tears; and homes were made desolate and filled with mourning. Zeke's twin brother fell at his side, and another brother stepped forward and filled his place in the front rank; for Reub and Mother Reub gave six sons to go in on the double quick where the cannons belched forth fires of death, and the muskets were blazing, and bayonets were pointed, and the battle raged, and the lines surged forward and backward, that the union of these United States might be one and inseparable. And in all the land there was not a home free from mourning.

The order came: "Fall in!" And Jim and Will grasped their guns and stood shoulder to shoulder, and side by side they kept step. Will fell from the ranks, and Jim was detailed to care for him; and the next day, October 5, 1863, Will said: "Jim, I saw such a beautiful country, and heard such lovely music." And Will again closed his boyish blue eyes, and Jim was standing alone by the side of a dead soldier and a dead brother. A kind and merciful God has given no kinder brother to bless an humble home, and to Freck he was the other half of his soul. And Freck lived over again his boyhood days with Will, and his heart cried: "Oh, this cruel, cruel war! The price is too much! the price is too much!" The months dragged past, bringing new sorrows; and the fountain of tears overflowed in every home.

While down in the South-land the bayonets gleamed in the sunlight, and the valleys were darkened by the smoke of battle, and a loaded musket stood by the bedside, in the dark shady woods, on June 21, 1864, there was born to

Freck and Mary a sweet little baby girl; and they called her Margaret Florence. And here is the picture of the little baby girl born in the dark shady woods on the western frontier, twenty-three years thereafter.

FLORENCE

The months, wholly indifferent to the tears of the wives, the mothers, and the sisters, passed right on, and smiled and frowned and stormed in the same old way; and the whirlpool of this world's affairs went on around and around, and Freck was caught in the whirlpool. He bought cattle and horses and timber lands, and operated the mill, and shipped lumber up river by steamboat. The steamboats would send out the three long "Whoo! Whoo-o! Whoo-o-o!" And the great bell would ring out, "Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!" which said: "I'm going to land! I'm going to land! I'm going to land!" And the little bells over the engines would say: "Slow up." And the pilot would whirl his wheel and the boat would glide up and poke her nose against the soft bank, and the line would be made fast around a tree, and the gangplanks would be run out; and a line of deckhands would trot out on one plank and back on the other, and soon the deck would be piled with lumber. And the gong over the furnace would say to the firemen: "Build up your fires." And the great bell would call: "Let go the line. Let go the line. Let go the line." And at times the Captain would call: "Freck, come aboard and go up with us." And at times Freck would step aboard, and in a dreamy haze he would watch the great foam-capped waves roll off down the river, growing smaller; and he would think of the *Red Wing*, and of all the years that had come and gone. And while Freck was thus engaged, almost day and night, and in fighting the mosquitos, and shaking with the ague, and taking calomel and quinine, and in watching the Indians and the refugees, and could not keep his eye on them, the years sneaked past.

Down in the South-land the roar of the cannon, the shriek of the shells, and the trampling of the armies made the earth tremble; and the feeble moan, the pitiful wail, and the cry of agony from the torn and mangled rose up to the throne of God, and the angels veiled their faces and wept; and the blood dripped through into Hell, and the Devil sat on his throne and chanted in triumph. And a pyramid reaching higher than the million of the dead and the wounded was builded, and still the war to destroy and to perpetuate this government went right on; and time went right on, and the whirlpool of this world's affairs went right on, and Freck was in the whirlpool and was carried around and around.

Freck bought and sold cattle and horses and made new farms. There was a wood famine on the river for the steamboats; for the men were away wearing the blue. So Freck employed about fifty Indians to chop cordwood; and some of the steamboat men swore at such wood, but they had to buy it. The refugee caring for Freck's cattle got on a protracted drunk, and the cattle became crazed for water and broke the fence and went out on the ice on Horseshoe Lake, a hundred or more, and the ice broke, and twenty-one big, fat, three-year-old steers were drowned; they were worth fifty dollars a head. And the Indians dragged them from the lake and smoked the flesh, and feasted on the bones and the other parts, reserving the smoked flesh for summer.

In the spring of 1865 Freck heard the great bell on the hurricane deck of a passing steamboat calling: "I 'm going to land! I 'm going to land! I 'm going to land!" And the little bells said: "Slow up." And the *West Wind* poked her nose into the soft bank, and the great wheels kept slowly revolving and holding her nose against the bank while the gangplank was run out; and a tattered coat of blue limped ashore. There were tears of rejoicing over the return of old Jim, and there were tears of sorrow over the absence for ever of Will. Freck learned all about the battle, and the soldier that fell at Nathan's side (whose name wasn't Sam), and how he lay on the battle-field and knew, as in a dream, that the Blue and the Gray were leaping over the dead and the wounded, and knew that the blood was flowing from his wound; and how he, still in a kind of dream, thought of home and mother, and watched Nathan's face grow whiter and whiter until Death spread his ashen wing over his boyish face and his glazed eyes looked up at the sky.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Down in the South-land the cannons were silent, the bayonets no longer gleamed in the sunlight, the smoke of battle had lifted from the valleys, and the cruel war was over. And the union of these United States of America was one and inseparable. And the perpetuation thereof is now with the people of the South-land; for the North-land is honeycombed with anarchy and kindred heresies.

While the tramp of the mule down in the South-land was heard among the cotton and the corn, and the tattered coats of gray were struggling with the problem of "Reconstruction" and the building of their homes, there was born to Mary and Freck, September 7, 1866, a son; and they called him Robert, and for ever after he was their "baby boy."

One morning in the early spring, facing a strong wind driving flurries of hail-snow, a prairie schooner drawn by three yoke of oxen was slowly making its way along a dim trail across the bleak prairies of northeast Nebraska Territory; seated among the stuff was Margaret and her children; and Press, wearing a faded coat of blue, was the pilot. And following was one drawn by two yoke of oxen; and Belle (the wee curly-headed baby girl that the Mother carried from the deck of the *Red Wing*) and her two children were snuggled away from the flurries of hail-snow; and Steve, wearing the tattered garb of a cavalryman, gave the oxen the required encouragement. And a third, drawn by two yoke of oxen, followed; and the Mother, with her back to the flurries of hail-snow, sat therein; and the Father, with hair as white as the snow, and his tall, slender form a little bent to meet the wind and the hail-snow, walked, as was his custom, by the side of his oxen. They were going forth, the Father in his seventieth year, to seek out and build for themselves homes on the bleak prairies of the western frontier.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Doctor John and Elizabeth returned to the West, fetching along their baby and Eleanor, Doctor John's sister. Nature was kind to Eleanor, and gave her an attractive form and face and a kind and gentle spirit; and Mary and Eleanor became very dear friends. Eleanor taught school until she met Chan, a worthy young man; and it happened to Eleanor and Chan as it has happened to many young people, and will happen to many more young people—they loved and married. They hauled lumber from the Missouri River and built a little house, and while Chan placed the lumber on the wagon, Eleanor pulled up the little cottonwoods on the sand-bar and they were planted on the north and west of the house. Doctor John and Elizabeth lived on the adjoining claim on the north, but to the west there was not a settler between them and the Rocky Mountains, five hundred miles away. They plowed and they planted, and Eleanor and Chan harvested the heaping loads of golden corn; and while Chan threw it into the crib, Eleanor prepared the dinner. And they were happy; for they had each other.

The wheel of time had revolved seven times, and three babies played in the shade in the cottonwood grove; in the yard were flowers and vines, and in the barnyard there were horses and cows; and they had laid a goodly foundation for a home on the western frontier. The wind came howling down from the northwest, driving the blinding snow before it, and in the midst of the awful storm Eleanor gave birth to two tiny baby girls; and six hours thereafter Eleanor paid the price with her life. Her small form was clothed in her wedding garments, and her hands were folded over her breast and her voice was silent; but even in death Eleanor was beautiful. Mary and Freck stood side by side and watched the drifting snow pouring over into the new-made grave on the bleak prairie on the western frontier, where Eleanor will sleep till Jesus comes. Elizabeth took the babies to her home and divided the nourishment from her breasts with them and her own baby; but in a little while a grave was digged by the side of Eleanor and a tiny coffin was lowered into it, in which were sleeping, side by side, two little babies. Mary and Freck took two little girls to their home, and tenderly cared for them until their grandmother came from the East and carried them away; and thirty years thereafter one of these little girls visited Mary and Freck in the West. Eleanor was Freck's cousin.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The mules were harnessed to the wagon, and Freck and Mary pulled out for northeast Nebraska Territory, to seek out a home on the western frontier. In time they crossed the Missouri River at Omaha, and they camped on the bank of the river and lariated the mules in the tall grass right where the great steel railroad bridge is now lariated to the bank. How do I know this? Because I was there when the railroad bridge was builded, and furnished much of the lumber used in building the skeleton bridge. They passed through the "stake of Zion," Florence, and passed the log cabins in the woods called De Soto City, and camped one night on the ground where the city of Blair now stands. And forty-one years thereafter they visited Doctor John and Elizabeth in the city of Blair, where once they had camped on the wild prairie. Verily, no man nor woman has ever lived who has witnessed greater changes in a country than Freck and Mary have seen in the western frontier. They drove across the prairie onto Bell Creek, and the Logan, and the Elkhorn, camping wherever the sun shut the door in their face.

They lingered awhile with Press and Margaret, and Steve and Belle, and the Father and the Mother; and then they passed on to the north, passing through Tekama, a dozen houses at the foot of the river bluffs. And all day long they drove up the wide valley, without a house; but they met several bands of Indians. Near the north line of the Territory they crossed the Missouri River on a flatboat, run by an Indian and a white man; and passing through Onawa, they drove on to the Maple River, and to "Zion's stake," Preparation; and crossing the Jordan, they drove south, and camped one night on the ground where now stands the city of Missouri Valley. Crossing the Boyur River, they struck out onto the Honey Creek hills; and passing through "Zion's stake," Crescent, camped at night on Council Creek, near the now center of the great city of Council Bluffs.

In the evening, as they drove around Horseshoe Bend, the thunder began to rumble and to roll, and the lightning to flash across the western sky, and the black clouds in their haste rolled and tumbled over each other, and the sun in a fright quickly slipped in behind the angry storm-clouds and turned down his lamp; and as the light of the world began to grow dim they came to a cabin in the lonely woods. They were taken in from the threatening storm, and they were shown a little low shed, where was a bed. The thunder rolled and crashed and the lightning looked in through the cracks, and Mary and Freck talked in whispers and their hair seemed to creep, and they feared to close their eyes in sleep; for surely this was none other than a den of robbers in this dark and lonely wood. With beating hearts they listened, and they heard the voice of a man reading, and the moving of feet, and then they heard the voice of a man in prayer; and Freck and Mary, in perfect peace, closed their eyes in sleep.

CHAPTER XL.

Scraps of boyhood songs kept flitting through Freck's mind:

"Oh, the farmer's life is the life for me!
I own I love it dearly:
To plow, to sow, to reap, to mow,
And in the barn to thresh it."

Freck sold his mill, and bought a farm at Mount Pleasant Grove, Nebraska Territory—two hundred and forty acres, a house and barn, eighty acres in cultivation, forty acres of timber, and a spring branch; and Freck paid Joe Walker five dollars an acre to break eighty acres more. Freck and Mary moved onto the farm, taking along the babies, more than a hundred cattle, and a quarter-hundred horses. Freck ferried lumber across the Missouri River and built a new fence around a quarter-section (160 acres); for there was no wire fencing in those days. Freck had a lovely farm, and he kept on singing: "Oh, the farmer's life is the life for me!"

In the fall the grasshoppers came down and filled every spot and place where the sod was broken with their eggs. In the spring Freck paid two and one-half dollars a bushel for seed wheat and sowed the eighty acres of new land to wheat, and he planted the other eighty acres to corn; and the wheat and the corn grew and made the heart glad. And the cattle came up along the paths, lowing in the evening, to lick salt from the salt-boxes and to sleep at home; and Freck kept right on singing, real loud: "Oh, the farmer's life is the life for me!"

And the little grasshoppers began to hop and to eat, and in twenty days there was not a stalk of wheat standing on the eighty acres; then they started in on the corn, and they took it clean as they went; but suddenly, with a roar, they arose and flew away to the northwest. And the cattle still came up in the evening to lick salt from the salt-boxes and to sleep at home; and Freck sauntered around among them and in a submissive and subdued manner slowly and lowly sang: "Oh, the farmer's life is the life for me!"

And in the fall the grasshoppers returned like a mighty snow-storm, shutting out the sun and covering the earth and the trees, and they cleaned up the corn and the garden-truck; and Freck reaped not a sheaf of wheat nor an ear of corn from the one hundred and sixty acres, and the seed alone had cost him four hundred dollars. But the cattle still came up in the evening to lick salt; and Freck sat on the fence and looked over his brown and bare fields, and in a pensive mood he mused: "Oh! the farmer's life is all right, in song and story."

Freck sold his farm for five thousand dollars, and mounting his horse, he rode over the Missouri River (for the ice was twenty inches thick) and out to his old friend Reub, Zeke's father; and Reub and Freck got onto a dicker, and Freck bought Reub's farm at the foot of the river bluffs, with a big barn and a big house; the lower story was stone and the upper story was frame. Freck turned over to Reub one hundred and fifty cattle and a bunch of horses and money to make the price, eight thousand and eight hundred dollars. Freck planted one hundred and ten acres in corn, and he harvested seven thousand and seven hundred bushels of corn. He sold four thousand bushels of the corn in the crib, for forty-four cents a bushel, to Judge Bosbyshell, a merchant in Glenwood and the best man I ever knew; and the corn was shipped down river, to feed Uncle Sam's mules.

There was a little cabin on the farm, in the grove, twenty rods from the house; and Johnny and Abby lived in the cabin. Abby was a little bit of a thing, pretty and smart; and Johnny was short and stubby, and worked for Freck. Johnny was a good boy, and reliable; you didn't have to watch him. Both were young, and were still boy and girl lovers; they carried water from the well at the house with the pail between them. Billy was Johnny's brother; Billy was taller than Johnny, but younger. Billy worked for Freck in corn-shucking time, and made his home with Johnny and Abby. Johnny was real quiet, but Billy was mighty full of talk; and like two silly children, Billy and Abby talked and laughed and giggled. The Devil handed Johnny a cup of the bitter dregs of the wine of jealousy, and Johnny drank it; I don't know whether Johnny drank it all at once, or a little at a time. One morning Abby came flying down the path as fast as her feet could carry her, her hair all tousled up, and screaming: "Johnny — Johnny — Johnny's hanged!" Freck called to his men, and they ran down together; and there in an old hay-shed was little Johnny, his toes touching the ground, his knees bent, his short, chubby neck stretched away out, and in his stocking feet. We buried Johnny in the grove on the hillside, back of the barn. Little Abby crouched by the side of the grave and sobbed and sobbed; and her father came and carried her home to Missouri. Johnny is still sleeping in the grove back of the barn; and the Devil keeps right on, in the dark and dismal chambers of Hell, distilling the wine of jealousy and handing out the bitter dregs.

Freck sold his farm, and bought a steam saw-mill and timber lands, and he shipped timber and cross-ties up the river on steamboats, to build the Union Pacific Railroad west from Omaha. One morning the saw was singing its song and the engine was measuring off its strokes, and the men were performing their duties; some were singing, others were whistling, and all seemed full of gladness. Then Warren Mills, the engineer, with a song on his lips, was caught in the fly-wheel, and in the twinkling of an eye he was thrown to the roof, and fell mangled and broken. On the morrow we buried Warren, and the next morning another stepped into his place; and the whirlpool of this world's affairs went right on around and around.

When the great steel railroad bridge was built at Omaha, Freck furnished much of the material for the skeleton bridge; and men like ants climbed all over it. I don't know who drove the first engine over the bridge; but when I have gone whirling across, I have always looked for the trampled grass where Mary and Freck lariated the mules.

CHAPTER XLI.

Press and Margaret, and Steve and Belle, and the Father and the Mother put up a long and stubborn fight against the adverse conditions that militate against the settler on the western frontier. A little school-house and a little white meeting-house, with a graveyard at the back, were builded; for wheresoever the sons and daughters of men abide for a season, there must needs be a burial-place for the dead. And in this graveyard Belle buried three of her children, one a lovely girl of sixteen years.

The years went rolling on, leaving smiles and tears in their wake, and plowing furrows in the cheeks and painting streaks of silver in the hair; and babies were born and babies died; and the once bleak and lonely prairie was dotted over with groves of cottonwood, maple, and walnut. The privations, the hardships, and the scant living, known only to the early settlers, became less severe, and they began to reap some fruit for their labor and self-denial. But the passing years left the Father, sitting in his homestead cabin, in total darkness; for his eyes had gone out. The Mother, however, in her seventy-fifth year, was still putting up a good fight against the adverse conditions of life. But not a murmur escaped the lips of either. The Father would say: "It might have been much worse." And the Mother would say: "God knows best."

Freck was still in the whirlpool, going around and around, buying and selling, making new farms, and doing his part in changing the wilderness into a garden. He hauled lumber away up on upper Silver Creek, two days' drive, and built a nice frame house, and moved onto the farm; leaving the mill in charge of a foreman.

In the spring he sold the farm to an Irish blacksmith living in Council Bluffs, for twenty-five hundred dollars. Mary and Freck drove to Council Bluffs to make the deed and receive the money; for payment was not made by check, as there were no banks in those days on the frontier. It was four o'clock when they were ready to start for home; it was twenty miles, with not a house between, and the first five miles was through the brushy river hills. Soon Freck became oppressed with a fear that a band of refugee bushwhackers would follow, and they would be murdered and robbed; for, mind you, he had the twenty-five hundred dollars in his breast pocket. Freck could not refrain from looking back, but he pretented he was watching some bundles in the wagon; but when they reached the summit, and the road stretched away across the prairie for twelve miles, and the shades of night were creeping closer and closer and the sun was pinning a dark cloud-curtain over the window, Freck turned and took a long, listening, and anxious look behind. When Mary laid her hand on his arm, and with a frightened look in her eyes and a tremble in her voice asked, "Robert, are they following us?" Freck knew then that there were two hearts that beat as one. Now, Freck was driving a span of bay mares, for which he had paid Gran Fleming six hundred dollars, and he did hate awfully bad to overdrive them. But they kept pushing out their noses and saying: "Give us the bit; give us the bit." And Freck said: "Take the bit and go." The wagon spun around the windings of the divide, and when they whirled around the corner and drew rein before the gate, they drew a long breath of relief; and the bays were white with foam. It happened, but just how it happened Freck never knew; but when he was helping Mary from the wagon, she set her foot on the wheel and fell, but she fell right into Freck's arms. And Freck was so overjoyed that they had not been murdered and robbed that he gave Mary one mighty tight squeeze. A few days thereafter they returned to the mill in the dark, shady woods, Freck driving four mules and Mary driving the bay mares.

CHAPTER XLII.

The years drove right on, and didn't lay over on Sunday; and as they passed they threw off toil and care and disappointment and losses, and also gladness and sunshine, and the sons and daughters of men gathered up the sunshine and the gladness and laid them up in the storehouse of memory.

Freck sold out and moved three counties farther north, and opened up a new farm in the Willow Valley. Freck was still in the whirlpool of this world's affairs, and one fall he filled his pens with steers and hogs, and when he had fed ten thousand bushels of corn, and the hogs weighed three hundred pounds each and were worth six cents a pound, the cholera came along, and in twenty days one hundred and seventy had died; a loss of more than three thousand dollars. And there was a financial panic, and fat steers slumped from seven to five cents a pound, causing Freck a loss of twenty-five hundred dollars. Freck sold his farm and his stock cattle, a hundred head; and never again did he sing: "The farmer's life is the life for me."

In his despondency a voice whispered: "Freck, it is better farther on." And on the tenth of May the mules were harnessed to the wagons, and handing the reins over one four-mule team to Will, who had just passed the sixteenth milepost, they pulled out for the Rocky Mountains, to seek out and build a home on the western frontier. Crossing the Missouri River above Big Nettle Bend, the old logging-camp, in the midst of a fearful storm, which sent the waves rolling over the sides of the flatboat and made the mules rear and plunge, they drove out onto Davis Creek. Here they joined company with Press and Margaret, Steve and Belle, the Father and the Mother, Jim, and others—in all, fifty-one persons, great and small, and fifty-four mules and horses, eighteen wagons, and a bunch of cattle. And with Freck leading the caravan, they started out to find a home on the western frontier.

Crossing the Logan and the Elkhorn rivers, they pulled over onto the Platte River, and following up the Platte a hundred miles, they went into camp for the Sunday; for they did not travel on Sunday. Next day the few settlers were galloping around in a state of excitement, and armed with guns; and upon inquiry they learned that the day before a homesteader had been burned at the stake by the cattle men, because he had settled in the middle of the cattle range, and was too stubborn to leave the country when ordered to do so. Deeming it more safe, they crossed to the south side of the river and came into the Old Mormon Trail. Day after day they drove up along the banks of the Platte, following the footprints of the Saints, and like the Saints, not knowing wheresoever they were going; but they, like the Saints, had a living hope that they would find a home on the western frontier.

They followed the Old Mormon Trail for three hundred miles without a human habitation; and they went into camp over Sunday at the old Mormon crossing of the Platte. Here the trail leaves the Platte and winds away over the hills toward the Briar River. The banks were strewn with broken wagons and kettles, and the iron posts, the anchors for the little flatboat that the Mormons carried with them, were still standing. As Freck lay in his wagon on the Sunday, watching the white clouds floating away off down the valley, and the wind flapping the wagon cover, and the river gurgling and murmuring as it passed on to the sea, his thoughts were dwelling on Mary and the babies and a home on the western frontier. And closing his eyes, Freck, in a reverie, saw the Saints assembled here, men, women, and children, being jostled and crowded onto the little flatboat and ferried, load after load, over the river; and he heard the shouting as the cattle, the horses, and the sheep were driven into the river; and he saw their heads above the water, and their eyes wild with fright, as they swam for the other shore; and he saw the long train of covered wagons disappearing over the hills toward Briar River, and in the rear of the wagons a long train of push-carts, filled with bundles and babies, and pushed day after day and week after week by weary and worn mothers, on their way to the city of Zion, where they believed they would enter into tranquil rest for ever and for ever.

On Monday morning they left the Old Mormon Trail behind their backs, and to Freck it was the parting of old friends, for he had been traveling for three hundred miles with the Saints. There were many sunken graves by the wayside, and Freck, in his mind, had been present at the burial. He saw the death-flag raised over this wagon, and the watchman gallops to the front, and the grave-diggers in great haste dig a hole in the ground, and when the crape-marked wagon comes up, the signal is given and the oxen come to a standstill, and a tiny box is carried out; at the sound of the first clods the mother is hurried into the wagon, the signal is given, the drivers shout to their oxen, and the wheels begin to grind through the sand; and baby is left by the side of the Old Mormon Trail. And to this open grave is carried a delicate little woman, a true, loving, and faithful wife and a kind and prudent mother, who had put up an earnest womanly fight against polygamy, but had lost, and had lost all incentive to longer live. And with a great ache in her heart she closed her eyes in death, with the bitter knowledge that the husband of her girlhood would be comforted and his wounded heart healed by the ministrations of the younger and fresher three; and that she would never reach the city of Zion, but would be left alone, in an unmarked grave, by the side of the Old Mormon Trail. And in this grave Freck, in his mind, buried a tall, spare, bony woman, with a grim and determined habit of countenance, who had served with rigor a hard and exacting husband, and who, for the promise of being a queen and having as many servants to serve her "in the world to come," had with savage determination divided her husband with six others.

Slowly, step by step and day by day, leaving a cloud of sand dust floating on the hot and sultry air, marking the windings of the trail far to the rear, and not a human habitation in sight, with the mothers singing hymns, the children shouting in gleefulness, and the men in different ways persuading the mules to be good, the long line of wagons drew nearer and nearer to the Rocky Mountains. They went into camp for a day at Denver, away out on the plains, a half-mile beyond where the Capitol building now stands; and they camped over Sunday at Colorado Springs. Monday morning wagons were unloaded, and leaving the boys to herd the stock on the ground where now stands the mansions of the millionaires in the North End, they drove through the Garden of the Gods, and climbed the Buttes, and scratched their names on the rocks, and drank from the iron and the soda springs at Manitou, which were reached by stepping-stones across the miry margin. They continued on their way to the southward, winding around the base of Pike's Peak and Cheyenne Mountain, driving over the wild mesa where now stands the great summer resort and club-house, the Casino. And they camped on Little Rocky, near Bob Womack's cattle ranch; the same Bob Womack who discovered the first gold-mine on Cripple Creek.

Crossing Big Rocky, they pulled up Dead Man's Canyon, where a lone grave on the side of the mountain marks the last camping-ground of an early pioneer, who went forth to seek and build a home, and found a grave on the western frontier. And the hand of a true friend, that his name might not perish from the earth, had rudely chiseled on a rough stone the inscription:

"H. HASKINS.
MURDERED.
March 31,
1861."

H. Haskins was chopping wood in front of his cabin door, and some straggling Mexicans came riding down the trail; when within a few yards, they raised their guns and fired, and H. Haskins, the pioneer, fell dead, and the Mexicans galloped away. The boy who a few minutes before had gone to look after the oxen witnessed the shooting from a near-by hill, and hastened back; but Haskins was dead. The Mexicans passed around the base of Pike's Peak and up the Ute Pass (for there was no Colorado Springs nor Manitou in those days), and they met a man driving a yoke of oxen, and they shot the man and one of his oxen, and they roasted a supper from the ox. A daring pioneer struck their trail and followed on and on, until away up in the mountains, near the head of the Platte, he overtook them; and he kept in hiding, following after, until one night while they slept, and a storm was blowing, he crept up and cut the leader's head off, and fetched it back with him.

And there was Jimmy's camp. Jimmy, with his oxen, lived out on the plains, where the grass was good. And a band of Mexicans ran up against Jimmy's camp, and they drove off Jimmy's oxen, after they had killed Jimmy and burned his camp. A passing horseman discovered the dead Jimmy, and the few scattering settlers planted Jimmy. The Mexicans were pursued and overtaken, camped in the woods and feasting on Jimmy's oxen; and the ox-chains were looped around their necks and they were boosted up out of reach of the wolves. And every man returned to his own camp.

Mr. Robbins was an early pioneer in the Fountain Valley. His little son was herding the cattle on his pony, when from a near-by gulch a band of Indians rushed out; the little boy put up a desperate race for his life, but the Indians overtook him and murdered him in the sight of his mother, and with a war-whoop galloped away.

The old pioneers are passing away. But few remain who took part in the conflict with these blood-thirsty enemies on the frontier. Soon there will be no one left who took a part to tell the story of the hardships and the sufferings; of the cabin homes burned and whole families murdered; of the days and nights passed in hiding from the Indians who were watching and hoping that they would come from under cover; of the brave and indomitable women who stood, gun in hand, by the side of their husbands, to guard and to die for their children. The passing of these men and women, who, with ox team, axe, and gun, went forth to conquer the wilderness, has a pathetic interest and touches the heart and fills it with reminiscent tender compassion; but one by one they are passing over.

To the writer it seems but yesterday that he stood by the gate of his boyhood cabin home and watched the long trains of the "Forty-niners" passing day after day; but Time, with his cruel shears, has clipped off more than three score years and cast them into the eternity of the past. At this time the country west of the Mississippi was almost unsettled; not a mile of railroad west of the river. But history is made rapidly in the West. Measured in years, the pioneer days are not far back; but I have seen the frontier grow from a few cabins along the timber belts to a crowded mighty empire. But where are the old pioneers that blazed the way? They sleep in unmarked graves, or their names are recorded in the city of the dead. XX

CHAPTER XLIII.

The mules kept cutting off a step at a time from the front and pushing it to the rear of the trail, and the wind kept on flapping the wagon covers, and the women kept on singing hymns, and the children shouted in gladness, and the men, two and two, stood guard at night And the sand-storms swirled the sand into the gravy and into the batter, and the ashes into the face and into the coffee; and the hands were blackened, and the faces were grimy, and the garments were travel-stained. But all these things were accounted as nothing because of the living hope of finding a home on the western frontier.

They climbed the mountains two miles above the sea, and went into camp together for the last time. A thousand miles had been measured off, step by step, by the stubborn mules, and not a fatal accident, save one dog bitten by a rattlesnake. There were kind and tender good-byes, and hands grasped hands for the last time; and the company broke up into groups, and each started out along different ways, and many met no more for ever.

Jim, Press, and Freck placed the machinery in position, for they had fetched along a steam saw-mill, and soon the big sugar-pine trees were converted into lumber. In the fall Freck received a letter from Mary, saying: "Robert, build a cabin and send for me." Freck built his first cabin in the Rocky Mountains in Oak Creek Canyon; and while the railroad was building to the West, Freck wrote, saying: "Mary, the cabin's builded; come on, and

XX Looking back, along the trail, in the bends I see, grave stones, written, these all died in Egypt, and all that generation.

the mules and I will meet you at the end of the track." And when the train shrieked a long shriek and slowed up, and crept up to the end of the rails and stopped, the mules and Freck were waiting. The crowd poured down the steps, and in an expectant tremble Freck stood near and watched the faces; and when he saw Mary and the babies, his heart acted a little unruly; but he guarded the fountain at the low places. Away out on the wind-swept, sand-drifted, cactus-grown, barren plains, at the end of the railroad, on the western frontier, Mary and Freck stood looking into each other's eyes; and their hearts were bubbling over with gladness, for they had each other and all their babies—not one missing; for to Freck and Mary they were still their "babies."

The great mining boom was on, and men climbed the mountains, and waded the cold streams and panned dirt from the bottom; and in a state of excitement they ran to and fro, and slept on the dumps with guns to ward off the claim-jumper. And the face of the earth was digged full of prospect-holes. Saloons were planted along the trails, and dead mules soaked into the springs, and men had to drink beer. In two blocks on Cliff Street there were a dozen saloons and dance-halls and gambling-hells, and the doors were shut neither by day nor by night; and the air was polluted with the fumes of whiskey and stale beer sprinkled on the sidewalk. The "steerer" stood by the open door and called: "Faro! Faro! Faro to-night!" And the click of the gambling device was heard, and the "capper" won handfuls of money, and others went in and lost. The jingling piano, the tortured organ, the screech of the fiddle, the shout of the caller, the pounding of dancing feet, and the jingling of glasses rolled out through the curtainless doors and windows; and the Devil's revival-meetings were going the pace, and the Devil's lady mission-workers persuaded many to come to the Devil's love-feast.

Ben and Dick (there were a good many Bens and Dicks) were partners, and they spent the days digging holes in the ground and panning dirt from the bottom of the streams, and they lived in a little tent, and fried their bacon and flapjacks, and slept under the same blankets. And they began to spend the nights in the dance-hall saloons, and they thought sure that they were having the time of their lives; and they both fell down over the same bleary eyes and paint-daubed face, and they quarreled, and Ben shot Dick; and Ben gave a couple of "moppers" (sons of Satan, who hang around the saloons and mop the floors and do any kind of hellish work for the whiskey they can drink) a couple of dollars to plant his old friend Dick. And no one cared for these things; we didn't have the time, and it wasn't any of our business anyway.

Old Moccasin Jack lived in a cabin in the thick pine woods at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Range; and old Jack didn't go around much in daylight any more. Old Jack had a wife, a tall, slender, silvery-haired, stoop-shouldered woman, with sad, tender, pleading eyes; and Old Jack had led her along a mighty crooked path for a mighty long time, but, nevertheless, she had stayed with him, and she had clung to and fetched along over the trail a whole lot of womanly womanliness. The hot branding-iron of sorrow, hardship, and heartache had been used until there was no place to brand any more. They had a daughter, Hazel (and her name wasn't Hazel), twenty years old, the only one of seven left by the black angel of death; and Hazel's mother loved her with all of the mother love God had given her for seven. Hazel was a slender brunette, with her mother's sad, tender, pleading, dark eyes, and she knew more about the mountain birds, the squirrels, the deer, and the antelope than the spelling-book. Hazel lived the life of a nun, because her mother was her guardian angel.

One night, in the midst of a fierce mountain storm, there was a knock on Old Jack's cabin door, and Old Jack snatched his gun, and from a dark corner he called: "Come in." A stranger crossed the threshold; and Old Jack poked his gun into his face and commanded: "Hands up!" And the stranger was wise. "Now, who are you, and what are you here for?" "I'm a prospector, and lost in the storm." "You're a magnificent liar; you're a detective." De-tective! Ha-des! Them's the people I'm a-dodgin'. Search me, and if you don't find the evidence that I'm a road agent, then shoot." A "road agent" is a highway robber who "holds up" the mountain stages and "goes through" the mail and the passengers. The evidence was found, but Old Jack was as wise as a serpent and took possession of his two guns. And when the storm abated, Old Jack handed him his guns and belt, remarking:

"Don't hurry any to load your guns. Savey?" ("Do you understand?") "I savey." They shook hands, and the stranger started off down the trail, with his face toward Mexico.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Old Man Boyal was a pioneer from Missouri, and he fetched along a drove of cattle and some mules, and Budd and Zeph, his two sons, and their wives and old Mrs. Boyal. They settled away out on the plains, and he built a stone house and covered it with dirt, because the Indians couldn't set a stone house covered with dirt afire with their burning arrows. Zeph took the mining fever, and he left his wife, a good and true woman, but not very pretty, in a cabin away out on the plains, and came up into the mountains to locate a mine. Zeph camped by Old Jack's spring, and here he met Hazel. Zeph was a tall, handsome fellow, and he forgot all about his wife, a good and true woman, but not very pretty, away down on the plains. And Zeph prayed to Hazel, and, like all tall, handsome fellows, he could put up a mighty touching prayer to a young and innocent woman. Hazel was young and innocent and twenty, and had never heard a tall, handsome fellow pray, because her mother was her guardian angel. Zeph, like almost all tall, handsome fellows and almost all short, homely fellows, was bad at heart and a moral coward, and he did not dare to look into the sorrowful, pleading eyes of Hazel's mother and pray, but he prayed to Old Jack. Now, Old Jack loved Hazel with all the fatherly love left in his wicked and bad old heart, and he said: "Zeph, if you can make Hazel your wife in the full meaning of the word, I have no objections, for Hazel can't live this way always; but if I find you crooked with Hazel in the littlest bit, I 'll kill you before the sun goes down. Savey?" Now, Zeph had lied to Hazel and he had lied to Old Jack, for he said, "I 'm a single man," and Zeph knew danged well Old Jack would make good the killing. So he hastened to a jack lawyer, and the jack lawyer said: "Yes; bring your witness, and I will do the rest for fifty dollars." Zeph went down to a dance-hall saloon and said to a "mopper": "I want a witness, and I have five dollars for him." And the "mopper," the child of Hell, took the witness-stand and swore: "Yes, I'm the man." And Zeph walked away a single man. Zeph's wife harnessed the mules, which her father had given her, and with her two babies pulled out for her father's house, a thousand miles away, in old Missouri. Hazel's mother, having no longer a guardian angel's commission, and bearing the brands that Paul bore (Galatians vi. 17), died, and was buried among the pines at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

After two years, Press and Margaret, and Steve and Belle, and the Father and the Mother, and Jim returned over the old trail to the old home, and Steve and Belle laid their baby boy away by the side of the old trail. In due time they arrived at the old home. The years went rolling on, and the Father was laid to rest in the little graveyard on the once bleak prairie. And the years kept on sinking to the bottom of the sea of eternity, and the Mother, after battling with the storms, the hardships, and the privations of pioneer life for one hundred years, two months, and twenty-three days, fell asleep in Jesus and was laid by the side of the Father. And Belle, the wee curly-headed baby girl that the Mother carried in her arms from the deck of the *Red Wing*, and who had spent all of her life contending against the hard conditions encountered on the western frontier, laid aside her armor and surrendered to the last enemy, the black angel of death, and was laid by the side of her three children and the Father and the Mother. And three years latter Steve was laid by her side. And when the Son of Man shall come in the clouds of heaven, with the angels of His might, and shall call His sleeping saints, there will be a glad meeting in the little graveyard on the once bleak prairie. And the years went rolling on, rolling on, and the black angel of death found Press, away out on the western frontier, and without an hour's warning, cut him down in the full strength of his manhood.

Freck and Mary remained in the Rocky Mountains, and Freck took the mining fever, and he lost his head and went plumb crazy. He spent his money digging in the ground, and he "grub-staked" men, and bought them *burros* and blankets, and gave them money, and sent them into the Elk Mountains to prospect on the halves, and he never again heard from his men; and when his money was all in, he traded his mules for holes in the ground. Yes, Freck, like thousands of others, surely lost his head over holes in the ground, which were called "mines." In the process of time Mary and Freck's babies all married, except their "baby boy" and Florence, the sweet little baby girl who was born in the dark, shady woods while the cannon down in the South-land belched forth fires of death and a loaded musket stood by the bedside. For twenty years Freck trailed over the ranges, and up and down the canyons

Freck at 66.

and the gulches, at times working for a "grub-stake," and again digging holes in the ground and panning dirt by the streams, and living in cabins and tents and covered wagons. And Mary stayed with Freck through all these long and weary years, and shared his discouragements, his failures, his hopes, his cabins, his tents, and his covered-wagon homes in the Rocky Mountains. And in the evenings, while the mountain wind sobbed and moaned in the pines or shivered through the aspen groves, with a miner's glass they would examine the bits of rock and be almost persuaded that the hidden treasure was almost within their grasp. From the far north to the far south end of the Rocky Mountains, thousands of men were doing as Freck was doing, and meeting with the same disappointments; and many grew discouraged and reckless, and became dissolute gamblers and drunkards, and went to the dogs. But during all these years Freck never stood at the bar and drank a glass of whiskey, nor played a game of cards, nor crossed the threshold of a dance-hall; no, thank God! not once; because Mary stayed with him and was his guardian angel.

MARY, PAST 65.

For three years Freck worked in a lumbering-camp in the Rocky Mountains and dug no holes in the ground, and had gotten together fifteen hundred dollars in gold and three teams; for Freck and Mary worked with their might and early and late.

Then they, by a schemer, were induced to turn their faces to the south and take up land under the great Tess

Valley Canal in New Mexico, and build homes on the frontier. They crossed the Sangre de Cristo Range at Moscow Pass, and in time went into camp in sun-blistered New Mexico. Freck took a contract to dig a section of the big ditch by the yard, payment to be made each month; and he employed a lot of Mexicans. The hot Mexican sun baked the ground and blistered the men and vexed the mules, and water was hauled away out on the sun-dried plains for men and mules. The combined efforts of six mules and three Mexicans induced the great plow to move forward among the stones, and the scrapers and the picks and shovels followed; and the alkali dust arose in a dense cloud and ate the eyes and the nostrils of the men and the mules. And on pay-day there was smooth talk, but no money; and Freck kept right on paying the Mexicans in gold, earned in the lumber-camp. After many months, some of the big promoters came out from Saint Louis; and their engineer measured the work, and Freck had two thousand and two hundred dollars coming to him. And there were others. A Mexican contractor and his men were waiting for their money, and they were in an ugly temper. A promoter called: "Men, you shall have your money by ten o'clock to-morrow morning. I'm going to the express office to fetch it." And he drove away.

On the morrow all were waiting; and a promoter came to the office door and in an insolent manner called: "No use you fellows waiting around here. Wagner didn't go away to come back." And he shut and locked the door. When the Mexicans understood it, there was a howl of rage, and they ran to the tent and fetched a rope, and handing it to Freck, said: "You *mucho bueno amigo*." ("You much good friend.") "You tie, we pullee." Because Freck had paid his Mexicans, he was "*mucho bueno amigo*," and every Mexican was his "*amigo*"; for they are much like children, easily pleased and quickly enraged. And the Devil whispered: "Freck, you *mucho bueno amigo*. You tie, we pullee." And Freck gritted his teeth and said: "Danged if I don't!" And he gave the door a vicious kick and demanded: "Open the door." A voice inquired: "Are the Mexicans at your heels?" "They are not. Open the door." The key turned, and Freck scrouged in, turned the key, and put in in his pocket. Now Freck never could say what he wanted to say at the time he wanted to say it, but he started in and said all he could think of at the time, and closed by saying: "I will turn the key and the rope over to the Mexicans." And the three began to promise and to plead: "We will send your money as soon as we reach Saint Louis." "You are all sons of Belial; you will do nothing of the kind." And they pleaded: "For the sake of our wives and our babies, don't turn us over to those howling Mexicans." And when they put it up to the babies, Freck fell down.

He went out, turned the key and slipped it in his pocket, and called: *"Amigos! Amigos! Vamos casa.* He pay *mañana."* ("Friends! Friends! Go home. He pay to-morrow.") "He mucho lie. He no pay. You *mucho bueno amigo.* You tie, we pullee." And all the afternoon Freck moodily thought of the gold paid out, and looking upon his lean and jaded mules, he forgot all about the babies. And he gritted his teeth and said to himself: "Dang 'em! they deserve hanging." And the Devil overheard him and gave him an encouraging smile.

At supper Freck was moody, hateful, and snappish, and he growled: "I'm going up and give the key and the rope to the Mexicans." And Mary said: "Robert, don't do it. If you get one drop of blood on your hands, you can never wash it off." And Freck remembered the babies, and while the Mexicans were eating *chilli con carne,* he handed in the key, saying: "Save yourselves from the Mexicans." And they surely did.

Five years thereafter Freck and Mary passed down the valley, and the great canal lay as they left it. They talked of the golden dollars, and the lean and jaded mules, and the Mexicans pleading: "You tie, we pullee." And Mary asked: "Robert, aren't you glad there is no blood on your hands?" But Freck didn't know for sure.

CHAPTER XLV.

Freck and Mary and others harnessed the vexed mules and turned their faces to the north. They had buried a summer's work and twelve hundred dollars in the ditch on the arid plains of New Mexico. Slowly they wended their way along the trail, camping when the sun shut the door. They came to the Grand River, rushing through a great gash in the sun-baked plain, and the mules slid down the steep bank on their haunches into the seething flood. And in a rage the water rolled and sloshed into the wagons, and lifted the mules off their feet, and muttered: "Get out of our way, or we will, as we did the band of Mexicans and their wives and their babies and their ponies, send you to the bottom and cover you with sand." But the mules were taller and more stubborn than the ponies, and they scrambled to their feet and defiantly flung the water from their long ears into the face of the old river, and floundered on and clambered up the opposite bank. And as they circled

OLD SPOT.

around to go into camp, as his custom was, Old Spot opened wide his mouth and raised the tune, and a score of mule voices joined in the song: "Ye-haw! ye-haw! ye-haw-haw-haw-haw!" It gives me pleasure to introduce you to Old Spot, for Old Spot was a good mule and was always glad to go into camp.

Day after day they passed slowly to the northward, and they pulled up a narrow canyon and came to some *adobes* (huts built of blocks of sun-dried mud) and Mexican men, women, and children, and a gate chained and locked. And a Mexican with a gun in his hand said: "*Amigo*, pay *dinero.*" ("Friend, pay money.") "Me open gate." And Freck asked: "*Amigo, a como vende?*" ("Friend, how much?") "*Amigo, dos pesos.*" ("Friend, two dollars.") Two dollars were placed in his little yellow hand, and as we passed through the gate, with a smile we said: "*Amigo, mucho gracias.*" ("Friend, thank you.") But, like the old colored man when praying for the boys that stole his water-melons, "all de time we wished de Debble had 'em." Often the Mexicans at night would drive off the camper's horses, and in vain would he search for them. And a Mexican would come around and say: "How mucho *dinero*, me fetch *caballos?*" ("How much money, me fetch horses?") "*A cinco pesos.*" ("Five dollars.") And away he would gallop and fetch them in to camp.

The mode of life among the Mexicans is much like it was in the days of Abraham. Hitched to the plow is a *burro* and a pony or an ox and a cow, with a boy or a girl on each side to keep them in the furrow. And at harvest-time men, women, and children go into the little field with the same crooked hand reaping-hook that Joseph's brethren used when their sheaves bowed down to Joseph's sheaf. And poles, in forks, are placed around the threshing-floor, to keep the stock in, and ponies and *burros* and goats are turned in, and boys and girls with sticks to keep the stock going around and around. And when Nature did not furnish the wind to winnow the grain, a sheet was tied to two poles and two women flapped the sheet and winnowed the grain.

They passed through old Fort Garland, and passed Kit Carson's old home, and spoke a few words to one of his sons, a half-Mexican, and started in to climb to the top of the range. They came into the old Government

Trail, and soon they were up among the snow and the ice. The old trail was not much used any more, and the narrow grade, winding around the mountains and hugging close to the points and ledges, and climbing higher and higher, was badly washed out and drifted full of snow and ice; but with great care, and much chopping of ice, they passed along on the very edge, where to look down made the head giddy, and where, should the wagon slide but a few inches, it would plunge down hundreds of feet, dragging the mules to the bottom. After two days of toil and danger, they gained the summit, and on the night of December 2d they went into camp on the tiptop of the mountain range, more than two miles high, and in snow nearly three feet deep. As they circled around on the top of the range and in the deep snow Old Spot raised the tune, and a score of glad mule voices joined in the song: "Ye-haw! ye-haw! ye-haw-haw-haw-haw!"

The mules were double-blanketed; and the camp-fire was soon roaring and blazing, and the savory smell of frying bacon and coffee and flapjacks was floating away over the mountain peaks and down into the gorges of La Veta Pass. The Sun just turned down his lamp middling low, and never blew it out at all, but used the mountains for a lamp-shade; and old Time had dinged and battered the edges of the shade, and the light stole up through and painted the low-hovering dome of heaven with streaks of old gold, silver, vermilion, and amber. And the lovely and chaste Twilight, pleased with the novelty of a camp on the tiptop of the range and in snow three feet deep, lingered around until the Sun rudely pushed her over the ledges, down into the dark chasms, canyons, and gorges, where the mountain lions, the bears, and the bob-cats delight to dwell, and where the Sun never shines. Holes were scooped out in the snow and blankets were spread, and the snow kindly, softly, and silently drifted over the beds and shut out the freezing cold. And Freck and Mary, in their snow-drifted bed, slept the sleep of the worn and weary, and dreamed: "It is better just over the range."

While the Morning was battling with the Night, Freck and Mary came into the clear, tingling, biting mountain air. And Old Spot laughed his merry morning laugh, and called for his breakfast. Away to the eastward, and miles below, from a split place in the earth streamers of light shot up through the darkness, and striking against the dome of heaven, they spread out all along the ceiling and drove the darkness down closer to the earth. And the streak of light along the sky became broader and brighter, blotting out the stars and driving the darkness lower and lower; and it became a surging sea of blackness, and angry waves were dashed at the light to drive it back; and arrows of light were shot into the waves of darkness, and they burst into sparkling gems of crystal light. And the angels, looking down upon this wonderful battle and glorious victory, of the light over the darkness at the birth of the Morning, smiled with gladness and softly touched their harp-strings. Mary and Freck stood side by side on the tiptop of Sangre de Cristo Mountain ("Mountain of the Blood of Christ") and gazed in awe, tinged with fear, at the batle of the light with the darkness at the birth of the Morning. And they turned from the scene that made the angels glad, and bowed down and took up the toilsome and wearisome tasks of life. Mary washed the tin plates and the frying-pans, and Freck harnessed the mules to the wagon, and they went forth to seek out and build for themselves a home on the western frontier. And never again, on the tiptop of Sangre de Cristo Mountain, did Mary and Freck stand side by side.

They camped near a Mexican *plaza*, on the banks of the Huerfano River; and day after day they followed around the foot-hills, buying supplies of the Mexicans. In time they passed through Pueblo and came into the old trail that they went out on, at the head of Dead Man's Canyon; and again they halted by the lone grave of the pioneer who went forth and found his long home on the mountain-side on the western frontier. Following around Pike's Peak, they pulled up the Ute Pass into the mountains; and away up toward the head of the Platte, they set up their tent at Harry Buckman's lumber-camp. And Doctor Wright persuaded Florence to leave her father and her mother and cleave unto her husband. And to Mary and Freck there only remained their "baby boy."

The Midland Railroad was being built through the mountains, and the mountains were full of men and teams; and four of these men didn't like to work on the railroad. There was a store and a post-office, and the storekeeper took in lots of money. These four men, wearing masks, at the close of business, walked into the store and said: "Hands up!" A helper didn't respond very quickly, and they batted him over the head with a revolver; and he didn't tie any bundles for a long time. Pouring the money into a bag, they backed to the door; and seeing Tom Bailey coming their way, they took a shot at Tom and plowed a ragged furrow around the side of his head and made Tom spin around like a top. In the morning Ed Bell and others struck the trail and followed over mountains and canyons. Three got away after the battle, but Ed fetched one back to camp; for Ed was from Texas and wasn't scared any at a dead man behind the saddle. The dead man was stretched on the ground and an old horse-blanket thrown over him; and Freck, and many others who had never seen a dead robber shot in the eye, took a good look at the man who wanted to get money quickly and easily yesterday, but had no use for it to-day. The other three were captured away down on the plains and sent to prison.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A rumor came floating over the mountains and the canyons that Bob Womack had discovered gold on Cripple Creek. Now, Cripple Creek was a little crooked mountain stream, born near Pike's Peak, and Cripple Creek was a great cattle range, and one would think that being born near Pike's Peak and in a great cattle country was glory enough; but the little crooked stream was as ambitious to find the way to the sea as the mighty Mississippi, and she ran down through the deep gorges, glided through the cool aspen groves, timidly crept under the rock-slides that the mountain storms had shaken down in her way, and slipped around the gold-ledges of Battle Mountain, Bull Hill, and Tenderfoot, and smiled over at Mount Pisgah, and kept on and on till she came to Four-mile Creek; and the bigger sister just swallowed the littler sister, and Cripple Creek never found her way to the sea at all. The timid little stream, after leaping and splashing over the waterfalls, gurgling around in the little swirlpools, and quenching the thirst of the great herds of cattle, the bands of the free wild horses, the free wild cowboys, the deer, the mountain lions, the bears, the bob-cats, the antelope, the

First House in Cripple Creek, December, 1891.

A Cripple Creek Mule.

wolves, the jack-rabbits, the birds, and the squirrels, left her name to the greatest gold-camp on earth.

Day and night Freck heard a voice saying, "Cripple Creek, Cripple Creek," and he and Jim Walker rolled their blankets and struck the trail. The packs got heavy and their feet got sore; but hope springs eternal in the prospector's breast, and he cares for none of these things. They arrived on Cripple Creek, and they started out along diverging ways, but with the same purpose in view. The city of Cripple Creek did not exist, even in the mind of man, but there were two places of business in the gulch: one was a kind of a pole pen covered with dirt, in which Pete Heddick kept some flour, tobacco, bacon, coffee, and canned tomatoes; the other was a wagon-box placed across a couple of logs, in which were whiskey and bottled beer, and the beer was only one dollar a bottle.

The first night Freck fried his slice of bacon, brewed his coffee in a tomato-can, baked his flapjack, and rolled up in his blanket in an aspen grove in Squaw Gulch, where the city of Anaconda now stands; and he slept and dreamed of gold-ledges, true fissures, and rusty gold. In the night he awoke with a mighty pain, followed by a mighty flux; and two nights and days he lay alone in the aspen grove. No, not wholly alone, for Death came and sat down on the edge of the blanket; and Death looked pleased, and kept on saying: "Ah, ha, Freck! I've got you this time sure." And Freck was too sick to talk back. But Bill Ray passed down the gulch and stumbled over Freck. Now, Bill was in a hurry to find a place to drive a stake, but he halted long enough to say: "Hello, old fellow! Are you going to start a graveyard?" And handing Freck a part of a bottle of cholera medicine, Bill hurried on down the gulch. The next morning Death rose up and said: "Freck, I'll bid you good-bye; but I'll come again sometime." XX

Crowds began to rush to Cripple Creek, and the stages and the hacks dumped good men and bad men, rich men and poor men, and good women and bad women into the camp. And they jostled and jammed, surged and crowded, and located claims one upon another, and there was shooting and stabbing, compromising and law-suits; and Cripple Creek was getting ready to go on the map of the world. Dirt was carried on men's backs to the streams, and the glittering grains of gold panned out. Cripple Creek got

XX This was June 1891. This is 1920. 29 years have gone and Death delayeth his coming.
Freck.

bigger and bigger day by day, and shacks and tents covered the hills. The saloons, gambling-halls, and dance-halls multiplied, and were run wide open day and night. And the same old "steerer," or one just like him, stood at the entrance and gave the same old call: "Faro! Faro! Faro to-night!" And the same old "capper," or one just like him, won handfuls of money, and others rushed in and lost. And the same big blonde Swede, or one just like him, with a tuft of whitish whiskers stuck on the point of his chin and his big hands cramped to fit around a pick-handle, stood by the wheel of fortune, and the wheel was baited with a twenty-dollar goldpiece; the big blonde Swede would lay down a dollar at a time, remarking each time: "By golly! Ay tank Ay ketch dat felly dies time." And when seventeen dollars had passed from the pickhandle-cramped hand to the hand of the dapper little devil with the silk hat and a smirk who always stopped the wheel with the needle pointing near the golden bait, the big Swede turned away, saying: "By golly! Ay tank sure I ketch dat felly, but Ay don't."

Some men drank whiskey and beer, and slept in the back shed of the saloon, and took pneumonia and died; and men who didn't drink whiskey nor beer slept on the ground in brush sheds, close to their prospect-holes, and took pneumonia and died. The black angel of death gathered in an abundant harvest; but the crowds increased, and Cripple Creek grew bigger and bigger day by day. In the summer of 1891 Freck and partners built the first miner's cabin in Grassy Gulch, where the city of Cameron now stands.

Chit was the first man killed in a mine accident in Cripple Creek. Chit was a big cowboy from Texas. With undaunted courage he would spur his horse into the milling herd of long-horns and go around and around in the jam, firing his revolvers, until the maddened circling mass of long-horns would go down the trail on the run; and with the same undaunted courage Chit, by the light of the camp-fire, would deal himself three aces and his partner two aces. But Chit was caught in a "cave-in."

The great whirlpool of a mining-camp went on whirling around and around, and the jam and the jostle, the crimes and the drinking; the gambling-halls and the dance-halls were open by day and by night, and the Devil held a "love-feast" in the saloons and the dance-halls seven days and seven nights each week, and the Devil's lady missionaries induced many a "tenderfoot" to come to meeting. Nevertheless, Cripple Creek grew bigger and bigger day by day. The decent people passed by on the other side, and at times, when they were having a real good meeting and a high old time, the toughs would take a shot at the decent people, just to see them take to cover. And the decent people held a half secret and half public meeting, and they appointed a long-legged twenty-year-old Irish boy to act as marshal. Soon after this a "tenderfoot," much against his will, was furnishing the sport for the crowd, and the long-legged Irish boy "ran in" the fellow with the gun; that is, he arrested him and put him in the "lock-up." Jack Smith heard about it. Now, the Devil had commissioned Jack Smith a bishop, or presiding elder, or head boss, or something of the kind; any way, Jack Smith took a six-shooter in each hand and walked down to the little pole "lock-up" and shot the lock all to pieces and kicked open the door; and Jack Smith said, and he said it out loud, that should the long-legged Irish boy come from under cover, he would have to be carried home in a gunny-sack. One night the Devil's workers were having a real good meeting and a high old time, and they were wondering what had become of the long-legged Irish boy; suddenly he stood in the door, with a six-shooter in each hand, and with a "Hello, boys!" he began pulling two triggers at the same time; when the crowd had thinned out and the smoke had cleared away, Jack Smith and two of his best co-workers lay all of a heap, and there wasn't a mite of breath in their lungs. And the long-legged Irish boy wasn't carried home in a gunny-sack either.

Freck and partners had located mining claims on the top of Bull Mountain and elsewhere. Freck built another cabin near the big spring, where the city of Cameron now stands, in Grassy Gulch, and Freck and Mary and their "baby boy" moved into it. Freck sold his mules and kept on digging, and when the money was all in, and he no longer was able to buy a bit of bacon nor a pound of coffee, a pound of giant powder nor a yard of fuse, he would sell an interest in a claim and keep on digging.

The Bull Hill War came on, and the miners built a fort on the tiptop of Bull Mountain, and Freck and partners furnished the horses to draw the logs to build the fort. The miners, armed with rifles, shot-guns, and pistols (for the miners for some time had held up the stages and borrowed all the shooting-irons the passengers happened to have), were lined up on the tiptop of Bull Hill; the sheriff and his army were on Beaver Creek, under Galena Hill; and Grassy Gulch lay between. The miners sent Freck and Mary word, saying: "There will be a battle to-morrow; better get out from between." So Freck and Mary and others left their cabins and fled over to Cripple Creek and remained until the war was over. The Governor rushed the State Militia from Denver to Cripple Creek and into Grassy Gulch, between the two armies. And the Governor said to the sheriff: "Take your army back to Colorado Springs and disband." And the sheriff obeyed the order. And to the miners he said: "Surrender your guns and disband." And the miners surrendered some old shotguns and pistols; but they (wearing an innocent look) hid the rifles. The Militia went into camp on the tiptop of Bull Hill, and the Bull Hill War was over.

Mary and Freck returned to their cabin near the big spring, and the drilling and the blasting went right on, and the winding of the windlass with the two cranks. To-day would climb up from somewhere behind Pike's Peak (Pike's Peak was just over yonder beyond the valley of the Beaver, and Pike's Peak's little baby mountains at her feet) and hasten after Yesterday, and To-morrow would gallop along the sky trail in pursuit of To-day. The days all came up over Pike's Peak, and the days all went down over the range (the range was just beyond those sleepy blue foot-hills to the westward). And the Sun as he passed over Bull Mountain (and he passed every day) would smile down on Freck; for Freck was away up more than eleven thousand feet, and at times he was in the smiling sunshine while the clouds and the storms surged far below. And the Sun, with the lower half of his eye shut, would look back and say: "Freck, I'll see you again to-morrow." And then he would sink out of sight behind the range. The days kept right on passing, and Freck kept right on turning the windlass with the two cranks and winding up the broken rock until the dump was a little mountain and the shaft was five hundred feet deep.

Three years had passed over the range, and still hope kept the drilling, the blasting, and the winding going right on. Mary and Freck and their "baby boy" lived in their cabin near the big spring; and their "baby boy" never knew a home, nor ever wished to know a home, save with his father and mother. On the morning of December 26, 1894, with cheerful and hopeful words, as on other mornings, he went out from Mary and Freck, in the full strength of his young manhood; for he was twenty-eight years old. The platform on which he was working broke, and he fell to the bottom of the deep, dark, and jagged shaft, and was carried home to Mary and Freck dead. The pall of darkness fell over Mary and Freck, and hope died in their hearts; and Mary, crushed and broken, moaned and sobbed: "Oh, my baby boy, my baby boy!" They laid him to rest in Evergreen Cemetery at Colorado Springs. Never again did Freck return to the deep, dark shaft; never again did he stand by the windlass with the two cranks and witness the sun coming over Pike's Peak and sinking to rest behind the range. Freck and Mary left the mountains, and for six years they dwelt in the dark valley; and laid flowers on their "baby boy's" grave.

An Old Time Ozark Mountain Meeting House, Where the Gospel of "Peace on Earth and Good Will to Man" Was Preached to the Master and His Slave.

Again a voice seemed to say: "It is better somewhere else." And Frank said: "Mary, let us go forth and seek out and build for ourselves a home on the western frontier." The oxen were not yoked, nor the mules harnessed, but a train set them down on the shore of the Pacific Ocean. And they did not find the place in California, nor in Oregon, but away up in northeast Washington they bought a little farm. But it did not satisfy, it did not fill the place, and a voice seemed to say: "It is better somewhere

MRS. LILLIAN PARK.

else." And they sold; and after a journey of two thousand miles, they were dropped off in the Ozark Mountains.

Here is a picture of an old-time meeting-house, where the gospel of "peace on earth, and good-will toward men" was preached, in the Ozark Mountains, in the long ago, to the master and to his slave; and here is a picture also of a present-day Ozark Mountain preacher and family group.

And they bought a farm in the Ozark Mountains, and Freck and Mary lived alone, and said to their hearts: "Surely we have found the long-sought place." But, like Sister Lacy's heart, theirs would not believe it, and kept on longing for somewhere else. And after three years, the mighty enemy, the last enemy that shall be destroyed, the black angel of death, laid his hand on Mary; and for seven

MRS. CYRENE MILLS.

months Mary fought a good fight, but the enemy was stronger than Mary. Freck stayed by Mary's side day and night, and prepared the food, and assisted her from the bed to the chair; and he rested in a chair by her bedside. And their hearts were feeding on the hope that the parting of the ways was afar off. And the time came when Freck had to carry Mary to the chair. And their hearts still fed on the hope that the parting of the ways was afar off. And the time came when Mary could no longer be carried to the chair. And the conditions became known, and the neighbors came, two and two, and from ten until three each night they watched by Mary's bedside. There is no spot or place on earth where dwells a people with kinder hearts than in the Ozark Mountains.

And Mary said: "Robert, come near me; I want to talk to you." And he gathered the frail, emaciated form into his arms and held it to his breast; for not a morsel of food had passed her lips for twenty-one days. And Mary told him what she wished him to do when she was gone. And he has not done it. And with her little hand she smoothed his tear-wet cheek and said: "Robert, I did want to get well so much, that I might repay you for your kindness to me; but, bless your dear heart, I will bid you good-bye." And Mary and Freck for the last time looked into each other's eyes; and Freck's were dim with weeping, but Mary's were as clear and blue as the morning sky. And at the rising of the sun, on the twentieth day of June, 1909, Freck adjusted the pillows and stood alone by the bedside, and Mary, without a tremor or a sigh, fell asleep in Jesus. And after walking side by side with Mary and sharing the joys and the sorrows of life for fifty-two years, two months, and thirteen days, Freck was left standing alone.

You remember that a certain woman poured a box of very precious ointment upon the head of our Lord, and some found fault; but the Master said: "Let her alone. Why trouble ye the woman? Verily I say unto you, that wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this that this woman hath done shall be spoken for a memorial of her." And it is the desire of my heart that wheresoever this book shall be read the name of Mrs. Lillian Park and the name of Mrs. Cyrene Mills shall be spoken for a memorial of their kindness to Mary and Freck; for they were ministering angels in the time of sorrow.

And it is also the desire of my heart that when the storms of life are past, I may be laid by Mary's side; that when the Son of Man shall come in the clouds of heaven, with the angels of His might and the trump of God, and, as at the grave of Lazarus, our Lord and Redeemer (Whose we are and Whom we serve) shall call, "Mary, come forth! Robert, come forth!" we shall stand side by side by the open graves and look into each other's eyes, as in the olden time we stood side by side and witnessed the battle of the light with the darkness at the birth of the Morning, on the tiptop of the "Mountain of the Blood of Christ." For we will carry with us over the Jordan of the resurrection all the kind, tender, lovely, and sweet things of this life; but the bitter, cruel, hateful things will be left on this side the Jordan, and will not be remembered nor come upon the heart.

"There are eyes that with brightness were beaming,
There are lips that our own often met,
That the mould of the grave is now dimming,
That in silence unbroken are set.
Flitting, flitting away,
All that we cherish most dear.
There is nothing on earth that will stay;
Roses must die with the year.

" 'Tis the joys the most prized that are fleetest,
That quickest slip out from the heart;
As perfumes that are rarest and richest
Are the earliest ones to depart.
Flitting, flitting away,
All that we cherish most dear.
There is nothing on earth that will stay;
Roses must die with the year.

"Sadly, mournfully sighing,
Over their ashes we sit;
While the roses around us are dying,
And the moments so speedily flit.

Flitting, flitting away,
All that we cherish most dear.
There is nothing on earth that will stay;
Roses must die with the year."

"Dream on, dream on, nor breathe a single sigh
To wake the gentle zephyrs that veil the starlit sky."

All that is left is a dream of the eyes that with brightness were beaming, and the lips that our own often met.

Frank dwelt alone in his desolate home, and the tear-fountain overflowed day and night, and his heart cried: "I'm alone! I'm alone!" And in a dull, half unconscious, bewildered, and broken down he sat by the window and gazed toward the graveyard, hoping and half believing; but Mary never returned. And the man that wrote, "Death is only a dream," wrote a cruel falsehood.

The sun had risen in the east, had crossed the Ozark Mountains, and had set in the west for a year, and Freck was still dwelling alone in his desolate home. Then big-hearted and upright Joe Park drove up to the gate, and coming in, said: "You are living too much alone. I have come to take you home with me." And Lillian and Zetta and Joe treated Freck with much kindness and caused a streak of sunshine to shine across his dark and cloudy path.

Here is a picture of the home of Lillian and Zeta and Joe in the Ozark Mountains, on the hill among the trees.

Our Lord and Master felt the desolation of being alone and homeless; for one came to Him and said: "Master, I will follow thee wheresoever thou goest." But the Master replied: "The foxes burrow in the ground and have homes, and the birds build nests and have homes, but I am alone; I have no home to which I can take you. The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." And Martha and Mary and Lazarus lived in Bethany, and when the Master came to Bethany, they would take Him into their home and cause a streak of sunshine to shine across His lonely path. And because of this kindness it is recorded: "Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus." And Freck prays the Master to love Lillian and Zeta and Joe, and all others who showed him kindness in the time of trouble. And the Master has said: "Inasmuch as ye have shown kindness to one of the least of Mine, I account it as done unto Me. And ye shall not lose your reward."

In the long, long ago, when the winter wind would howl and drive the snow before it, and we sat by the fireside in our cabin home, the Mother would tell the story of the good woman whose heart was always sad because she had not lived at the time the Saviour was on the earth, that she might have shown her love and loyalty by ministering to His wants. And one cold winter day the wind was swirling the snow in blinding sheets, and the good woman sat by her warm fire and looked out the window at the people hurrying along the street, some clothed in goodly winter garments and some clad in tatters. And her heart was crying: "Oh, that I had lived at the time the Lord was on the earth! that I might have shown my love and loyalty by ministering to His wants." And she thought of a poor widow, and wondered, "Has this poor widow and her children food?" And she filled a basket, and putting on her wraps, she went forth into the swirling snow. The last crust had been eaten, and on her way home she met a little girl, bare-headed and bare-handed, battling with the storm, on her way to the baker's for a penny loaf of bread; and she led the child into a store and fitted warm mittens and a hood, and gave her money. And turning into a drug store, she overheard a poor man saying: "My wife is sick, and I came to get medicine; but I have not the money to pay you to-day." "My terms are strictly cash," answered the druggist. The good woman quietly slipped a dollar into the poor man's hand, and passed out the door. She laid aside her snowy wraps and, numbed by the cold, sat down by the fire and fell into the old line of thought: "Oh, that I had lived at the time the Lord was on the earth; that I might have shown my love and loyalty by ministering to His wants." She fell asleep, but the good woman did not know that she had fallen asleep; and looking up, she saw the Saviour standing by her chair and heard Him saying: "If you give only a cup of cold water, and if you minister to My poor, I account it as done unto Me, and you shall in no wise lose your reward." The good woman awoke, and she was alone; but she knew that the Lord had spoken to her, and never more did her heart grieve because she had not lived at the time the Lord was on the earth.

CHAPTER XLVII.

It has been said: "The man comes out of the environment of the boy."

Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin in the dark woods of Kentucky, and of English ancestry. Freck was born in a log cabin in the big woods of western Pennsylvania, and of Scotch ancestry.

Abraham Lincoln knew well the hardships, the privations, and the scant living of pioneer life. Freck placed his shoeless feet in the footprints of Abraham Lincoln through all the valleys of hardships, privations, and scant living on the western frontier.

Abraham Lincoln, as a lad, gained a goodly report as an ox-driver. Not a lad along the border could handle a long string of oxen better than Freck; and Freck also gained a reputation as a rider of unbroken colts.

Abraham Lincoln was a greater rail-splitter than Freck; but Freck has broken away up toward a thousand acres of prairie.

Abraham Lincoln spent but little time sitting on the backless puncheon benches in the rude log school-houses on the frontier. Five months, made up of the stormy days of winter, would cover all the time Freck battled with the long rows of hard words in Webster's Spelling-book and grappled with the problems in Ray's Arithmetic.

Abraham Lincoln's name is known to the four corners of the earth, and when he was carried to the grave, thousands attended and went home to weep. Freck has lived a life of toil and seclusion and is wholly unknown, and when he is carried to the grave, a few perhaps will stand by and go home and straightway forget that Freck ever lived, and his name will forever perish from the earth.

We cannot all build an empire, nor write our name on the pages of Time; but we can halt a moment by the way and speak a kind word, which will make a sad and lonely heart feel lighter and for the moment make the world seem brighter, and someone will be glad that they met us on the way.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Freck is still dwelling alone, and the clouds still come down and shut out the sunshine, and the tear-fountain still flows over at the low places, and his heart still cries: "I 'm alone! I 'm alone!"

When our Lord met Martha and Mary at the grave of their dead brother, the tear-fountain was flowing over; and Jesus was troubled in spirit, and His heart was moved with compassion for the sorrowing sisters, and the tear-fountain filled to the full and flowed over, and Jesus wept, and His tears mingled with the tears of the sorrowing sisters. Not that Lazarus was dead; but because He beheld the flowing tears, and looked into the grief-stricken faces of the bereaved sisters. And He cried: "Where have ye laid him?"

Dear sorrowing friend, when left alone, be not ashamed of the tears, but let them flow all along the banks; for Jesus knows all about it, and He loves you and pities you with a tender pity when He looks into your grief-stricken face and hears your heart cry: "I 'm alone! I 'm alone!" And it is a consolation to our sad and lonely hearts to know that Jesus knows. But this does not fill the aching void; for as it was in the beginning, when God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone," so it is, and so shall it ever be to the end of time.

And now, dear reader, we are nearing the parting of the ways. And no doubt you will say: "Well, now, I can write a better book." And perhaps you can; for you would not be mighty much of a writer could you not. Freck, in the long ago, blazed many a trail through the thick dark woods, and when the sun was sinking behind the tops of the trees, and the shadows were creeping through the forest, he would shoulder his axe and start for the camp. And as he passed back along the blazed trail he would see many crooked places, but there was no time to make the crooked places straight; the sun was going down and the darkness coming on, and he was going into camp. And as Freck goes back along the blazed trail in this book he sees many crooked places, but there is no time to make them straight; the sun is going down, the shadows are growing longer, and the night is coming on; Freck is seventy-five years old, and he will soon go into camp for the last time. Good-bye.

ROBERT R. LATTA.
(Freck.)

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